

MESSIAH THEOLOGY

VOLUME III:

BIBLICAL CONTINUITY



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OF:



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Preface



Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the Commandments of GOD and the faith of JESUS. Revelation 14:12



Two of the most important words ever spoken *outside* of the Holy Bible are: “Sola Scriptura”. These memorable Latin words simply mean: “Scripture alone”, but the principles behind the phrase “Scripture alone” fueled the Protestant reformation. Meanwhile, the ripples those words generated within the Church are still reflected in every statement of faith that proclaims: “Scripture is the final authority here on earth for all doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness”.

Both to the reformers and all modern-day “Berean”¹ followers of CHRIST JESUS, Sola Scriptura ultimately means: no extra-Biblical council, no man-made doctrine, no man-made tradition, no man-made interpretation, and no man-made commandment can overrule the divine authority of the Holy Bible! Therefore, all who sincerely hold fast to this sound guiding principle will never hear JESUS say to them: **“All too well you reject the commandment of GOD, that you may keep your tradition.”**²

Sadly, our LORD had to say those words to many religious leaders of the first century because they had allowed tradition and the doctrines of men to replace GOD’s Commandments in their lives. And this warning of JESUS led us to question many years ago if we had done the same thing in our lives.

We invite you to join us as we dive into the Scriptures to see what the Bible (and the Bible alone) has to say about the Biblical Continuity

¹ Acts 17:10-12

² Mark 7:9

Debate, and I pray that you will find these studies as enlightening as I did years ago!

May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the glorious name of our LORD, JESUS CHRIST!

Brother Eric



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Unless otherwise noted, Scripture taken from the New King James Version (as recorded in theWord® Bible software).

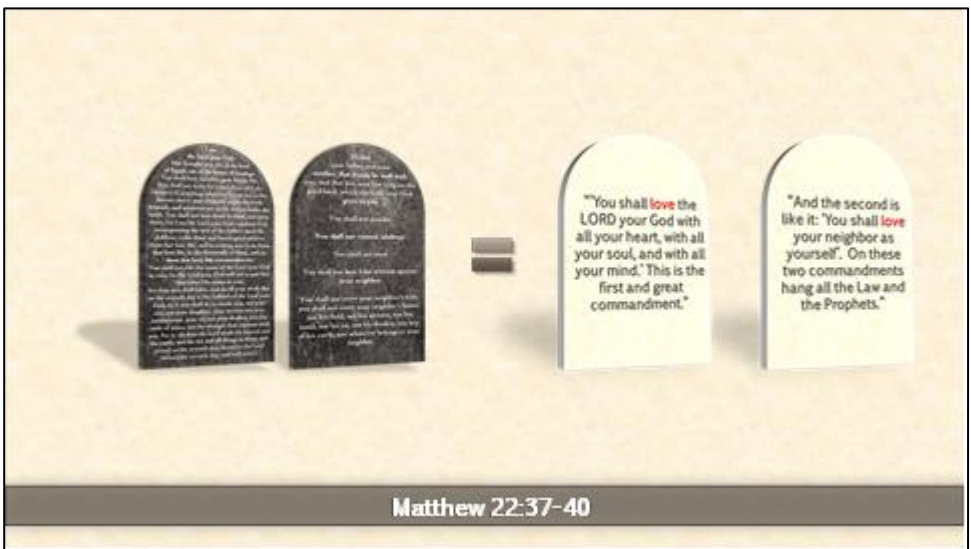
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Chapter 1: The Continuity Debate

There is one core principle that must supersede all others in the life of every follower of JESUS CHRIST, and that indisputable principle is *love*.

Therefore, our MESSIAH said: **“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”³**

Clearly (contrary to popular opinion) our Eternal King taught that true Christian love is not in any way opposed to the Law and the Prophets! Instead, JESUS stated that true Christian love is summed up in them! And this means that “all of the Law and the Prophets” are equal to the two Greatest Commandments: First, to love GOD with all our being, and second, to love our neighbor in a way that considers their value and needs equal to our own.



Likewise, the opposite is *also* true, and the two greatest commandments are to be considered equal to all of the Law and the Prophets. So, if you picture all of the Law and the Prophets as one side of an equation, on the other side of the “*equal sign*” you can write

³ Matthew 22:37-40

the words of the First and Second greatest commandments that both are based on “love”.

And this equation is revolutionary because it means: we are not free to define for ourselves what it means to love GOD with all our heart mind soul and strength, or to love our neighbor as ourselves. Instead, we must allow the progressively revealed Word of GOD to define what those “*loves*” must look like, in each and every situation.

This is why JESUS said: “**He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.**”⁴

Thus, because of this teaching of JESUS, John himself later explained: **By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.**⁵

Truly, love for GOD and love for our neighbor are perfectly consistent with keeping GOD’s commandments. And if we picture the commandments like guardrails on the road of Salvation, we can picture love like the center line we should drive next to.



⁴ John 14:21

⁵ 1 John 5:2-3

This means that when we violate the commandments of GOD, we are clearly not walking in love toward GOD or our neighbor. However, even though our earnest desire is to stay within the guardrails of GOD's commandments, our focus is not typically on the guardrails when we are driving down the road. Instead, we focus on the center line, while we keep the guardrails in mind, and this keeps us far from transgressing those guardrails!

And when we picture love and GOD's commandments in this way, we see that they are by no means opposed to one another! Anytime we violate even the *least* of the commandments, we are failing to obey either the first or the second of the two *greatest* commandments! So, with this eternal connection between love and GOD's commandments established, let's go all the way back to the beginning, to the Garden of Eden.

In the garden: loving GOD with all the heart, mind, soul, and strength was expressed at its most basic level by *not* eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil⁶. And we can say this because GOD Himself directly instructed them *not* to eat of that tree. Therefore, if they disregarded His plain instructions, they were also violating the greatest of all the commandments.

And since *all sin* is the breaking of GOD's commandments, the moment Adam and Eve disregarded the Word of the LORD and ate from that tree, they "knew" or more literally "experienced" evil, which is sin. And, because they willingly chose to sin: they demonstrated that they did not love GOD with all of their being. Therefore, their world, and even their relationship with GOD, was forever changed.

After they ate the forbidden fruit⁷, due to their rebellion against GOD's Word: they felt shame, they hid from GOD, and they brought several curses upon mankind and the earth. Therefore: they began the process of dying, and they were ultimately cast out of the garden where the Tree of Life was kept⁸.

And their experience proves in a very tangible way, that: *loving* GOD with all our being involves knowing, believing, and obeying every single progressively revealed word we have ever received from Him!

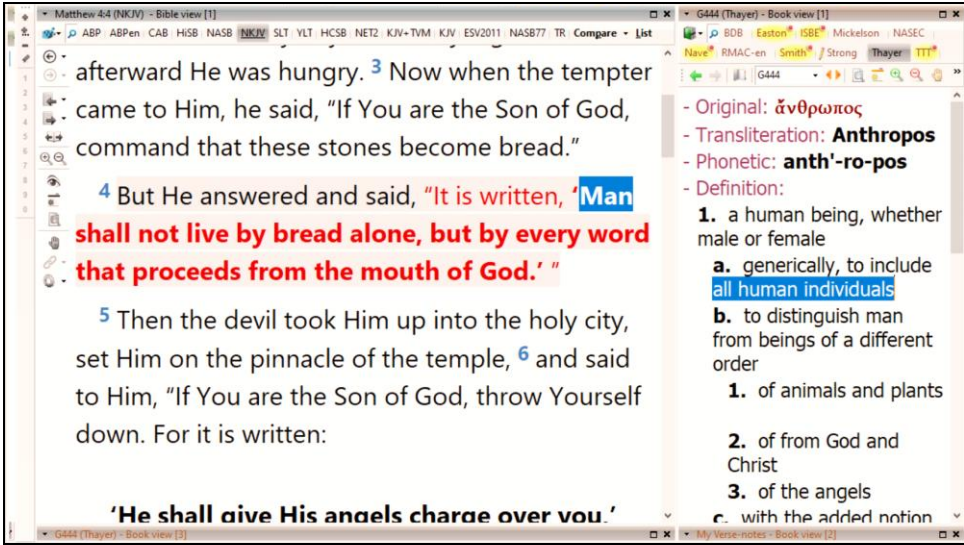
⁶ Genesis 2:16-17

⁷ Genesis 3:6

⁸ Genesis 3:23-24

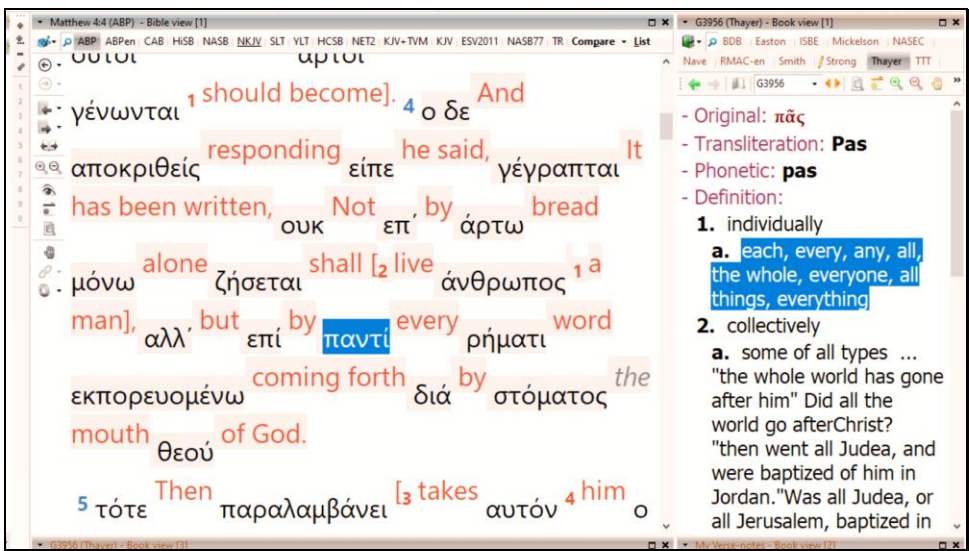
In fact, the Word of GOD plainly states: **“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.”**⁹

And, just as JESUS said that the Sabbath was made for *all* mankind by using the Greek word **“anth'-ro-pos”**, JESUS likewise revealed that *all* mankind must live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of GOD!



Now, the Greek word that JESUS used (that is here translated into English as **“every”**), is Strong’s number G3956. And JESUS would have pronounced that Greek word **“pān'-ti”**. But most importantly, we must note here that this ancient Greek word literally means: **“every, all, everyone, or everything”**, in a very broad, all-inclusive way.

⁹ Matthew 4:4



So, when JESUS put that particular Greek word in the middle of the phrase **“all mankind must live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of GOD”**, it quite literally means that every descendant of Adam must “live by” every single word that GOD has preserved in His Holy Bible!

Therefore, to begin to see how this verse would apply to Adam and Eve before the fall, please consider: Would it have been a sin for Adam and Eve to eat grilled salmon in the Garden of Eden?

Well, GOD very clearly told them: **“See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you, it shall be for food.”**¹⁰

So, in a world that was originally created without death, GOD told Adam and Eve that every seed-bearing green plant and fruit tree on the earth was to be food for them. And, in the original state of GOD’s creation, before the curse that brought **“thorns and thistles”**, this was an all-inclusive statement.

But, if Adam and Eve were to eat grilled salmon, they would need to *kill* a fish in the Garden. And by doing that, they would have introduced *death* into a world that did not know *death* at that time!

¹⁰ Genesis 1:29

After all, it is written: **“By one man, sin came into the world, and by sin death”¹¹**! Thus, it is a Biblical fact that there was no death in the world before the fall of man.

Because GOD *only* told Adam and Eve that He had very specifically given them every seed-bearing green plant and fruit tree on the earth, it *would* have been a sin for them to kill and eat a fish, like salmon. Meanwhile, both before and after JESUS our sinless Savior was crucified, buried, and resurrected, the Bible records that *JESUS ate fish!*

For example, Luke recorded that, after His resurrection, JESUS said to His disciples: **“Have you any food here?” So, they gave Him a piece of broiled fish and some honeycomb. And He took it and ate in their presence.**¹²

However, Hebrews plainly states: **For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.**¹³ So, why would it have been a sin for Adam and Eve to *hypothetically* eat fish, but it was not a sin for JESUS to eat fish? Well, the answer is found in the incontrovertible Biblical principle of *Progressive Revelation!*

You see, if you were to imagine yourself as Adam and Eve in the Garden, “every word that had proceeded out of the mouth of GOD” to them (at that point in history, as far as we can authoritatively know) is contained in the first two chapters of Genesis. And they were *only* accountable to live by every word *they* had received from *GOD*, but no more.

But, *later in the Bible*, GOD had much more to say about the descendants of Adam eating fish! So, JESUS was not sinning when He ate broiled fish, because He was “living by” every Word that had proceeded from the mouth of His Father; *including* the words that came *after* the fall of Adam and Eve.

And in this way, our LORD’s interpretation of Scripture always accounted for the fact that it was given to mankind in a chronological

¹¹ Romans 5:12

¹² Luke 24:41-43

¹³ Hebrews 4:15

way! In fact, with each new revelation, typically more responsibility was given to mankind; much like how a parent raises up a child.

So, JESUS and His Apostles and Disciples always demonstrated that they took an all-inclusive, harmonious, *chronologically cognizant* approach to Biblical interpretation; that did not allow earlier divine commandments to outweigh later divine commandments.

Now, to demonstrate this principle with another example from Scripture, GOD once said to Abraham: **“This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised; and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you. He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male child in your generations, he who is born in your house or bought with money from any foreigner who is not your descendant.”**¹⁴

Then GOD went on to say: **“He who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money must be circumcised, and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised male child, who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant.”**¹⁵

But later, in Scripture, it is written: **Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing.**¹⁶ And in another place, the Apostle wrote: **Was anyone called while circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Was anyone called while uncircumcised? Let him not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters.**¹⁷

So, are these contradictions in the Bible? No! They are what we call: *“Progressive Revelation”*. And by reading each passage on the subject of circumcision in the order it was *chronologically* given in the Bible,

¹⁴ Genesis 17:10-12

¹⁵ Genesis 17:13-14

¹⁶ Galatians 5:2

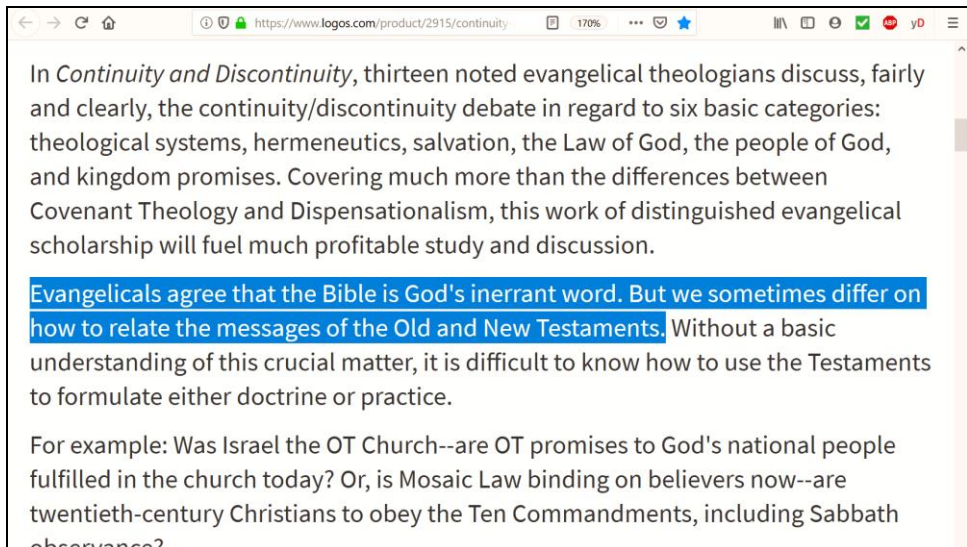
¹⁷ 1 Corinthians 7:18-19

we can establish what GOD wants us to believe about this particular **“fleshly ordinance”**¹⁸, at this time in history.

But, while the Bible most certainly does not contradict itself on the subject of circumcision, obviously there *is* what Theologians call a “discontinuity” between what was said about the custom of circumcision in the First 39 Books of the Bible, compared to what was said about the same custom in the Final 27 Books.

And we should mention here that the word “discontinuity” simply refers to some early principle or command *not continuing* beyond a certain point in Scripture. Or said another way: the word “discontinuity” refers to some earlier principle or command being *discontinued*.

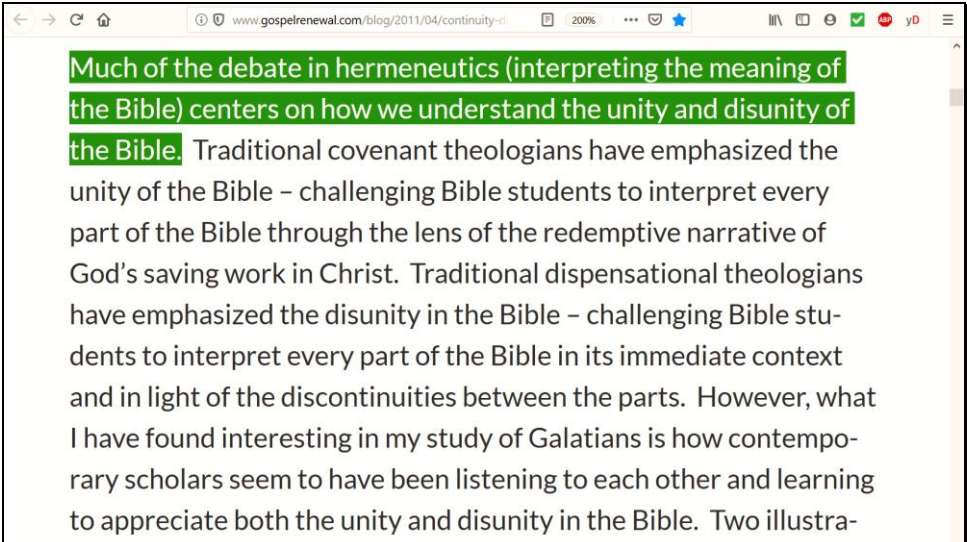
Also, we should note that these “discontinuities” are the main reason that there are so many disagreements and denominations in Christianity today! In fact, the most important and enduring debate that faces every follower of JESUS CHRIST since Acts chapter 10 is called “the Continuity/Discontinuity Debate”!



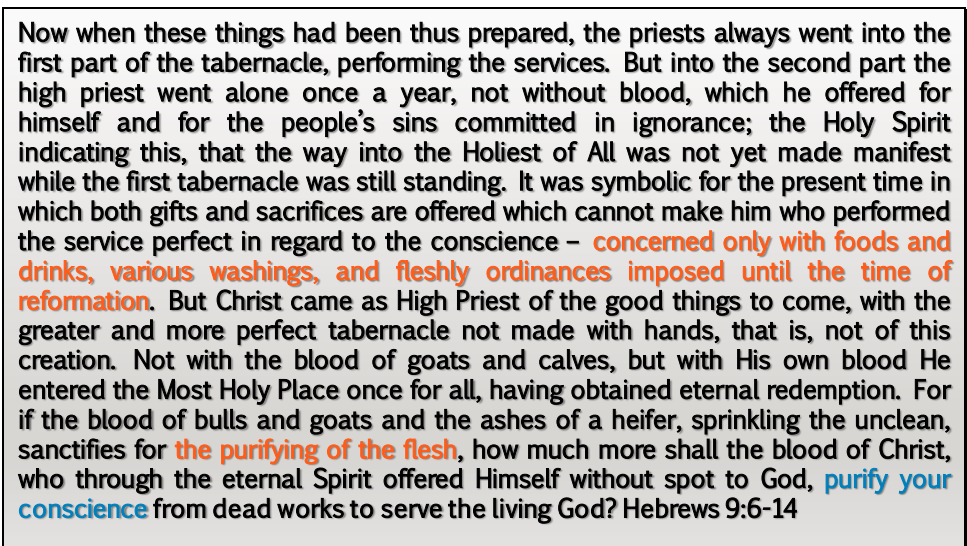
And one might say: every scholarly theological system ever invented by man, was conceived to attempt to settle the Continuity Debate in a logical systematic way. For instance, Covenant Theology relies on different “covenants” to explain the apparent discontinuities in

¹⁸ Hebrews 9:10

Scripture, while Dispensationalism looks to periods they call “dispensations”.



But the Apostles and Disciples of our LORD only spoke of an “*Old Covenant*” based on the Levitical rituals of the law compared to a “*New Covenant*” based on the eternal priesthood of the MESSIAH and obedient faith in Him.



And they once and for all settled “the Continuity Debate” in the Final 27 Books of the Holy Bible when they wrote things like: the Levitical system of the First Covenant was “**concerned only with foods and**

drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation”¹⁹.

However, when we read what they wrote under the inspiration of the HOLY SPIRIT, it is important to note that *there is a very clear difference between issues like Circumcision compared to the Sabbath*, for example.

And we say this because *many* passages of the Final 27 Books plainly indicate that *there was a change* in how the people of GOD were to view circumcision. But *no passages* actually indicate that there was a change in how the people of GOD were to view the Sabbath!

For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and **circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit**, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God. Romans 2:28-29

Consequently, unless we see a clear, indisputable case of *discontinuity* on some issue in Scripture, we must assume there is continuity! Or said another way: Unless the Word of GOD clearly and indisputably abrogates (or sets aside) some earlier commandment, we must never set aside that commandment! Now, let's look at another demonstration of how this principle works.

In Matthew, it is written: **These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: “Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”²⁰**

But later Matthew also recorded: **Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of**

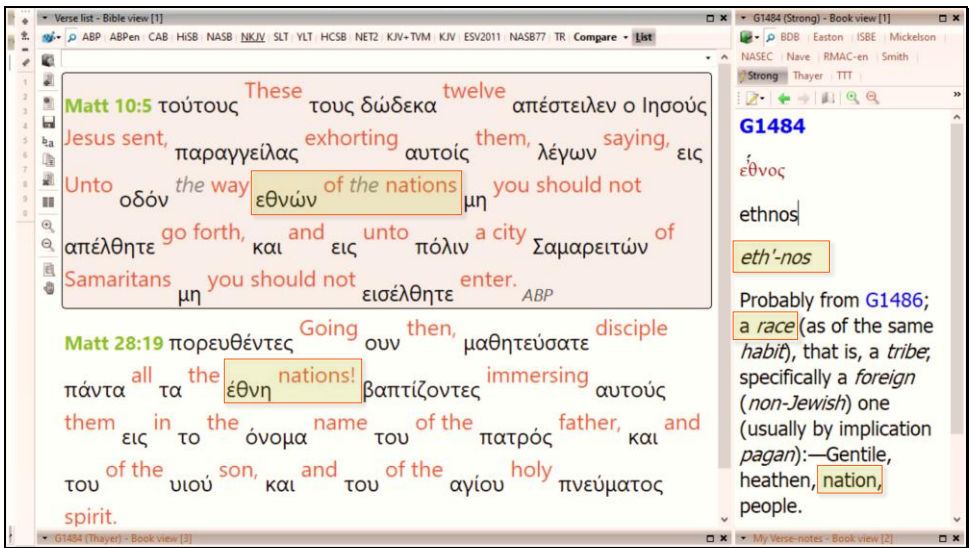
¹⁹ Hebrews 9:10

²⁰ Matthew 10:5-6

the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.”²¹

If the words of JESUS that Matthew recorded in chapter 10 of His Gospel came chronologically *after* Matthew chapter 28, then it would now be morally wrong and disobedient to preach the Gospel to anyone but the lost sheep of the house of Israel. But because chapter 28 came chronologically *after* chapter 10, it is morally right to make disciples of “*all*” nations!

By the way, the same word in the Greek manuscripts is confusingly translated as two different English words in these passages. But, without a doubt, JESUS used the same Greek word “**eth'-nos**” in *both* verses, and that Greek word simply means “**nations**”. Yet, either mistakenly or intentionally, translators have incorrectly rendered one instance of that Greek word “**Gentiles**”, and the other “**Nations**”.



Therefore, Matthew 10 and Matthew 28 were both speaking about taking the Gospel to “**the Nations**”; but in Matthew 10, JESUS forbids it, while in Matthew 28 JESUS commanded it.

²¹ Matthew 28:18-20

Progressive Revelation

These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: “Do not go into the way of the **nations**, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” Matthew 10:5-6

Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the **nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.” Matthew 28:18-20



Now, *as confusing as this may seem*, the fact is that there is actually no contradiction between Matthew chapter 10 and Matthew chapter 28! No, there are only two mutually exclusive commands given by our LORD at two *different* times in history! And He gave those commandments in that particular *order* because His divine justice demanded that the House of Israel receive the gospel *before* any other Nation.

So, when it comes to the obvious *discontinuity* between Matthew 10 and Matthew 28, we can see that these two passages fit the pattern Paul recorded, when he wrote: **For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.**²²

Yes, our GOD and Savior had a divine purpose in sending the Gospel to the Jews *first*; and while we may never fully understand all of His reasons, we do know that GOD’s divine prerogative was the reason JESUS *first* told His Disciples *not* to go to the nations, but *later* He commanded them to.

With such passages in mind, I pray that we can all see how certain obvious discontinuities in Scripture are why the principle of progressive revelation is so important! Because, if we get the order of certain passages of Scripture wrong or ignore certain later passages, we might actually *disobey* the clearly revealed will of GOD!

²² Romans 1:16

When faced with the principle of progressive revelation, some who deny the principle will quote the verse that states: “**GOD does not change.**” So, now we must ask, did GOD somehow change between the time that He told Adam and Eve that they were only given every seed-bearing green *plant* and fruit *tree* on the face of the earth, and JESUS eating *fish* with His disciples? Certainly Not! Truly, GOD did not change between those two verses, but the world and even mankind’s relationship with GOD changed!

So, when we see *major* changes in the world or mankind’s relationship with GOD, there are often *minor* issues of discontinuity. And, when we look back at Genesis, we see that Adam and Eve gave us yet another example of just such a thing!

You see, before the fall, the Tree of Life was part of the menu GOD gave to the first man and the first woman. But after they disobeyed Him, GOD cast them out of the Garden of Eden and kept them from eating from that blessed tree ever again. So, because of this change, we see discontinuity between the following passages.

First the Bible explained: “...**The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden...**”²³, and: “**The LORD God commanded the man, saying, ‘Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat...’**”²⁴. But after Adam and Eve sinned: GOD cast them out of the garden saying: “**...lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever’ - therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.**”²⁵

²³ Genesis 2:9

²⁴ Genesis 2:16-17

²⁵ Genesis 3:22-24

1) "...The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden..." Genesis 2:9

2) "The LORD God commanded the man, saying, 'Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat...'" Genesis 2:16-17

3) "...lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever' - therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life." Genesis 3:22-24

At one time Adam and Eve could eat from the Tree of Life, but later they could not. So, their access to that tree was *discontinued* because of their sin.

But, after the fall GOD repeated to Adam: **"Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field."**²⁶

So, even after the fall, GOD only permitted Adam and Eve to eat of the seed-bearing green plants and the fruit trees, and meat was still *not* on the menu for mankind at that time. But we see another discontinuity when we compare this menu to Genesis chapter 9, after a great flood reshaped the entire surface of the earth!

After saving Noah and his family (along with the animals) on the ark, GOD told Noah: **"Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs, but you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood."**²⁷ And this is the first time the Holy Bible records that mankind was permitted by GOD to eat meat.

²⁶ Genesis 3:17-18

²⁷ Genesis 9:3-4

But about the *type* of meats that GOD said Noah and his offspring could eat, the Bible records that GOD used the Hebrew word: “**reh'-mes**”.

the earth. ² “And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the air, on all that move on the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hand. ³ “Every **moving thing** that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs. ⁴ “But you shall not eat flesh with its life, *that is*, its blood. ⁵ “Surely for your lifeblood I will demand *a reckoning*; from the hand of every beast I will require it, and from the hand of

- Original: רמש
 - Transliteration: **Remes**
 - Phonetic: **reh'-mes**
 - Definition:
 1. creeping things, moving things, creeping organism
 a. creeping things
 b. gliding things (of sea animals)
 c. moving things (of all animals)
 - Origin: from H7430
 - TWOT entry: 2177a
 - Part(s) of speech: Noun Masculine

And this Hebrew noun comes from the Hebrew verb: “**raw-mas**”, which means: “**to creep or move**”.

the earth. ² “And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the air, on all that **move** on the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hand. ³ “Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs. ⁴ “But you shall not eat flesh with its life, *that is*, its blood. ⁵ “Surely for your lifeblood I will demand *a reckoning*; from the hand of every beast I will require it, and from the hand of

- Original: רמש
 - Transliteration: **Ramas**
 - Phonetic: **raw-mas**
 - Definition:
 1. to creep, move lightly, move about, walk on all fours
 a. (Qal)
 1. to creep, teem (of all creeping things)
 2. to creep (of animals)
 3. to move lightly, glide about (of water animals)
 4. to move about (of all land animals generally)

For example, the word “**raw-mas**” is translated as “**move**” when Scripture records: **So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that moves, with which the waters abounded,**

according to their kind, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.²⁸

The screenshot shows a Bible software interface with two windows. The left window displays Genesis 1:21 in the NKJV translation, with the word "moves" highlighted in blue. The right window shows the Hebrew text and a definition for the word "raw-mas".

Genesis 1:21 (NKJV) - Bible view [1]

with an abundance of living⁵ creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the face of the firmament of the heavens.”²¹ So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that **moves**, with which the waters abounded, according to their kind, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that *it was* good.²² And God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.”²³ So the evening and the morning were the fifth

H7430 (BDB) - Book view [1]

- Original: רמש
- Transliteration: Ramas
- Phonetic: raw-mas
- Definition:
1. to creep, move lightly, move about, walk on all fours
a. (Qal)
1. to creep, teem (of all creeping things)
2. to creep (of animals)
3. to move lightly, glide about (of water animals)
4. to move about (of all land animals generally)

Likewise, “raw-mas” is translated as “move” when the Bible records GOD saying: “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”²⁹

The screenshot shows a Bible software interface with two windows. The left window displays Genesis 1:28 in the NKJV translation, with the word "moves" highlighted in blue. The right window shows the Hebrew text and a definition for the word "raw-mas".

Genesis 1:28 (NKJV) - Bible view [1]

created nim; maie and remaie He created them.²⁸ Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that **moves** on the earth.”²⁹ And God said, “See, I have given you every herb *that* yields seed which *is* on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food.³⁰ Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to every thing that creeps on the earth,

H7430 (BDB) - Book view [1]

- Original: רמש
- Transliteration: Ramas
- Phonetic: raw-mas
- Definition:
1. to creep, move lightly, move about, walk on all fours
a. (Qal)
1. to creep, teem (of all creeping things)
2. to creep (of animals)
3. to move lightly, glide about (of water animals)
4. to move about (of all land animals generally)

²⁸ Genesis 1:21

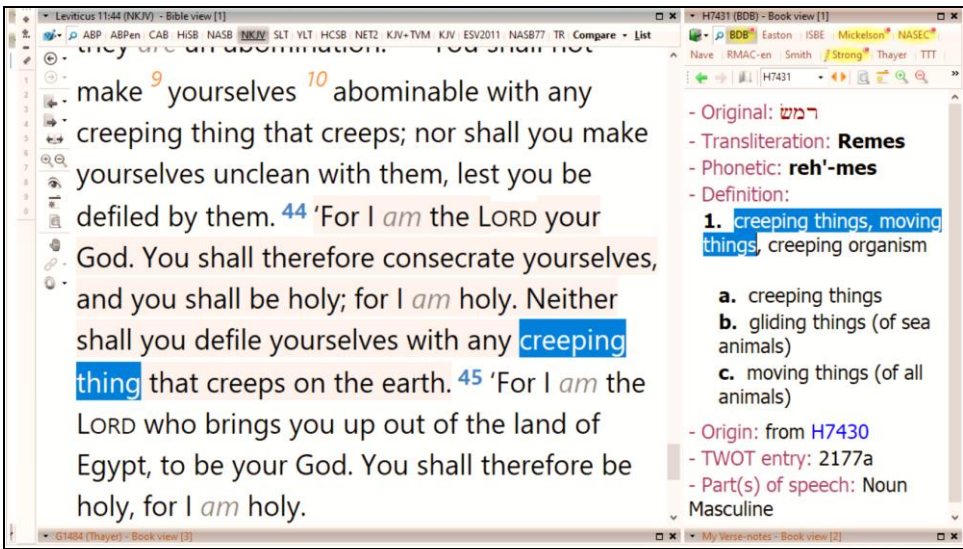
²⁹ Genesis 1:28

But occasionally, “**raw-mas**” is translated as “**creep**”, such as when GOD said: “**For I am the LORD your God. You shall therefore consecrate yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I am holy. Neither shall you defile yourselves with any creeping thing that creeps on the earth.**”³⁰

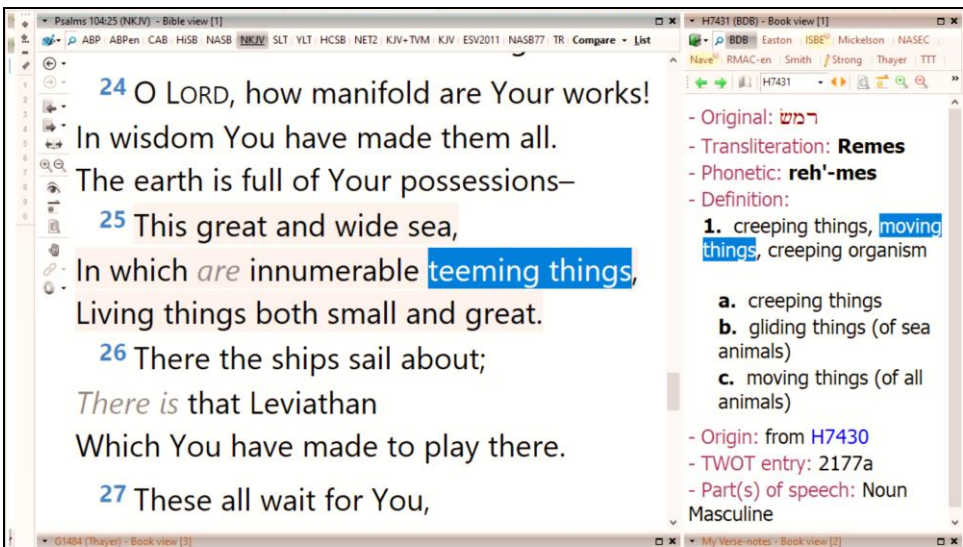
The screenshot shows two windows from Bible software. The left window displays Leviticus 11:44-45 with the text: "make yourselves abominable with any creeping thing that creeps; nor shall you make yourselves unclean with them, lest you be defiled by them. 44 'For I am the LORD your God. You shall therefore consecrate yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I am holy. Neither shall you defile yourselves with any creeping thing that creeps on the earth. 45 'For I am the LORD who brings you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy." The word "creeps" is highlighted in blue. The right window shows a lexicon entry for the Hebrew word "ramas" (רָמַס). The entry includes: Original: רָמַס, Transliteration: Ramas, Phonetic: raw-mas, and Definition: 1. to creep, move lightly, move about, walk on all fours; a. (Qal) 1. to creep, teem (of all creeping things) 2. to creep (of animals); 3. to move lightly, glide about (of water animals); 4. to move about (of all land animals generally).

Therefore, because the verb form of this word means: “**to move or creep**”, the noun form (that is only used 17 times in the Masoretic Text) means: either “**moving things**” or “**creeping things**”.

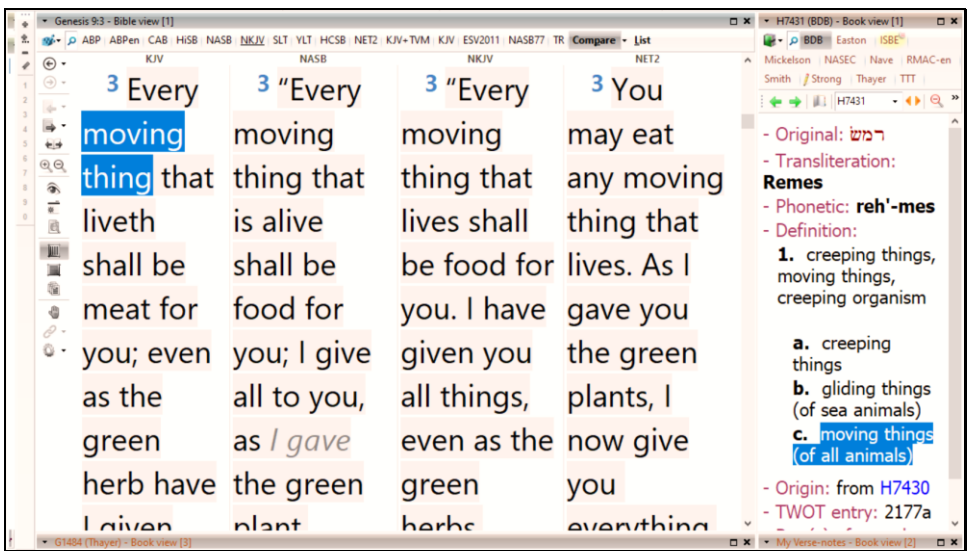
³⁰ Leviticus 11:44



Now, this noun *can* specifically refer to any *rapidly moving* animal (like a reptile); or, in the Psalms this same noun is used to refer to a swarm of fish.

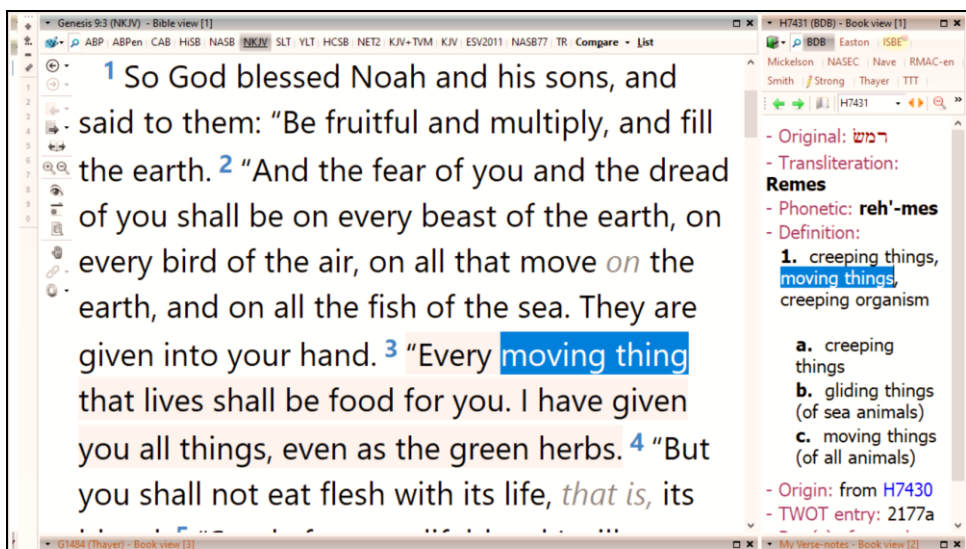


And with the fluid nature of this word in mind, we should explain: because of the context of Genesis chapter 9 (and the way the verb form of the word is used in many different passages) Hebrew scholars have long held that this same word can also refer to *every* type of moving animal on the face of the ground.

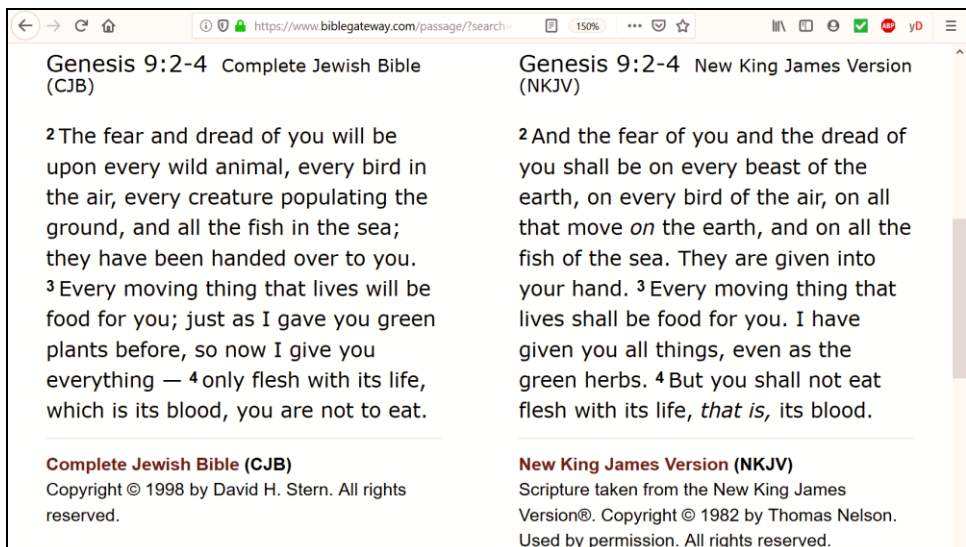


And this second, *broader* definition of the Hebrew word “**reh'-mes**”, has been customarily used in Genesis chapter 9, when Scholars translate verse 3. For example, the following English Bible translations all render “**reh'-mes**” and the surrounding Hebrew words into the English equivalent of: “**every moving thing**”: the King James, The New King James, The Complete Jewish Bible, The Hebrew Names Version, The Jubilee Bible, The World English Bible, the Revised Standard Version, The Third Millennium Bible, The Tyndale Bible, The Webster Bible, The American Standard Version, The Bible in Basic English, The Common English Bible, The Wycliff Bible, The English Standard Version, GOD’s Word Translation, The Lexham English Bible, The New Century Version, The New International Version, and The New Revised Standard translation.

And the contextual reasons that influence translators to use the broadest definition of the Hebrew word “**reh'-mes**” can be found in the sentences that surround that word in verse 3.

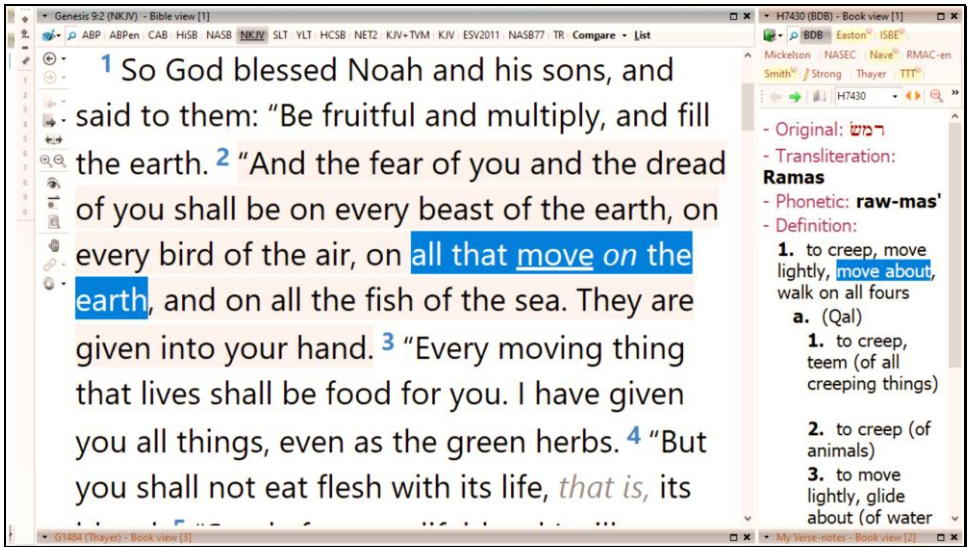


You see, in context, GOD said: **“And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the air, on all that move on the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hand. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs. But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood.”**³¹



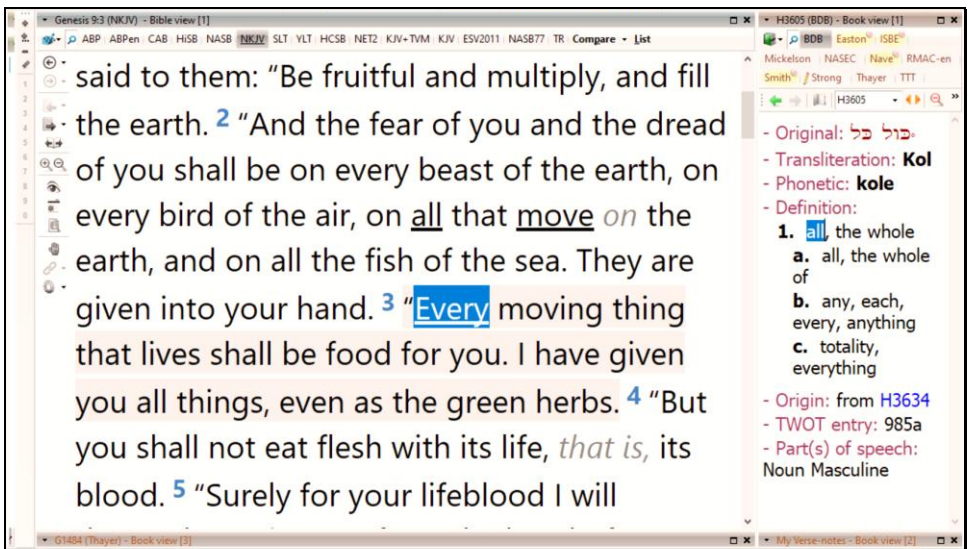
So, when GOD said **“all that move on the earth”** in verse 2, He used the verb form of the noun **“reh'-mes”** that is recorded in verse 3.

³¹ Genesis 9:2-4



Also, in the larger context, after listing: every beast, every bird, all that moves on the earth, and all the fish of the sea, GOD then told Noah they were “all” given into His hand.

Then, GOD used the Hebrew equivalent of the word “every” again, before saying “**every moving thing that lives shall be food for you**”.



But most importantly, when GOD recaps what He has approved as food for Noah, He said: “I have given you **all** things, even as the

green herbs.” And in every reputable translation, this phrase makes it clear that **“all”** things were given to Noah as food.

Genesis 9:2-4 (NKJV) - Bible view [1]

1 said to them: “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill
 2 the earth. 2 “And the fear of you and the dread
 of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on
 every bird of the air, on all that move on the
 earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are
 given into your hand. 3 “Every moving thing
 that lives shall be food for you. I have given
you all things, even as the green herbs. 4 “But
 you shall not eat flesh with its life, *that is*, its
 blood. 5 “Surely for your lifeblood I will

H3605 (BDB) - Book view [1]

Mickelson NASEC Nave^o RMAC-en
 Smith^o Strong Thayer TIT^o

- Original: כּוֹל
 - Transliteration: **Kol**
 - Phonetic: **kole**
 - Definition:
 1. all, the whole
 a. all, the whole of
 b. any, each, every, anything
 c. totality, **everything**
 - Origin: from H3634
 - TWOT entry: 985a
 - Part(s) of speech: Noun Masculine

Thus, that all-encompassing phrase that is translated in a similar way in every sound translation ever produced, combined with the earlier statement that listed *every* created beast, bird, moving thing, and fish as being **“given into Noah’s hand”** consistently leads Hebrew scholars to translate **“reh'-mes”** and the surrounding words in this verse as: **“every moving thing that lives shall be food for you”!**

Genesis 9:2-4 Complete Jewish Bible (CJB)

2 The fear and dread of you will be upon every wild animal, every bird in the air, every creature populating the ground, and all the fish in the sea; **they have been handed over to you.**
 3 Every moving thing that lives will be food for you; **just as I gave you green plants before, so now I give you everything** — 4 only flesh with its life, which is its blood, you are not to eat.

Complete Jewish Bible (CJB)
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Genesis 9:2-4 New King James Version (NKJV)

2 And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the air, on all that move *on* the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. **They are given into your hand.** 3 **Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs.** 4 But you shall not eat flesh with its life, *that is*, its blood.

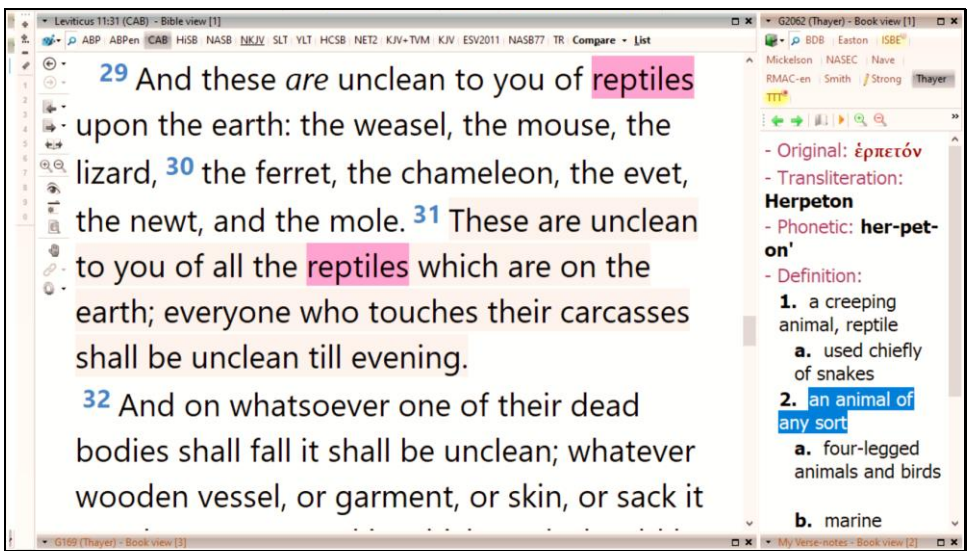
New King James Version (NKJV)
 Scripture taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Although the Greek word “**her-pet-on**” eventually came to mean “**reptile**”, we can see very clearly that “**reptile**” was not its original meaning. Especially when we look at how this particular word was used in Leviticus 11.

The screenshot displays a Bible software interface with two windows. The left window shows the Greek text of Genesis 9:3 with an English translation overlaid. The Greek text is: "χειρας υμιν οσωκα και παν ερπετον ο εστι ζων υμιν εσται εως λαχανα [3] vegetation χόρτου 4 of grass δεδωκα 1 I have given υμιν 5 to you τα πάντα 2 all]. 4 πλην Except κρέας [3 meat with the blood". The English translation is: "given them to you. 3 And every reptile which is living food; as vegetables [3 vegetation of grass 4 I have given 5 to you all]. 4 Except meat with the blood". The right window shows the Strong's Concordance entry for "Herpeton" (G2062). The entry includes: Original: έρπετον, Transliteration: Herpeton, Phonetic: her-pet-on', Definition: 1. a creeping animal, reptile; 2. an animal of any sort. Sub-definitions: a. four-legged animals and birds; b. marine animals. Origin: neuter of a derivative of herpo (to).

There it is written: “**And these are unclean to you of her-pet-on upon the earth: the weasel, the mouse, the lizard, the ferret, the chameleon, the evet, the newt, and the mole. These are unclean to you of all the her-pet-on which are on the earth; everyone who touches their carcasses shall be unclean till evening.**”³²

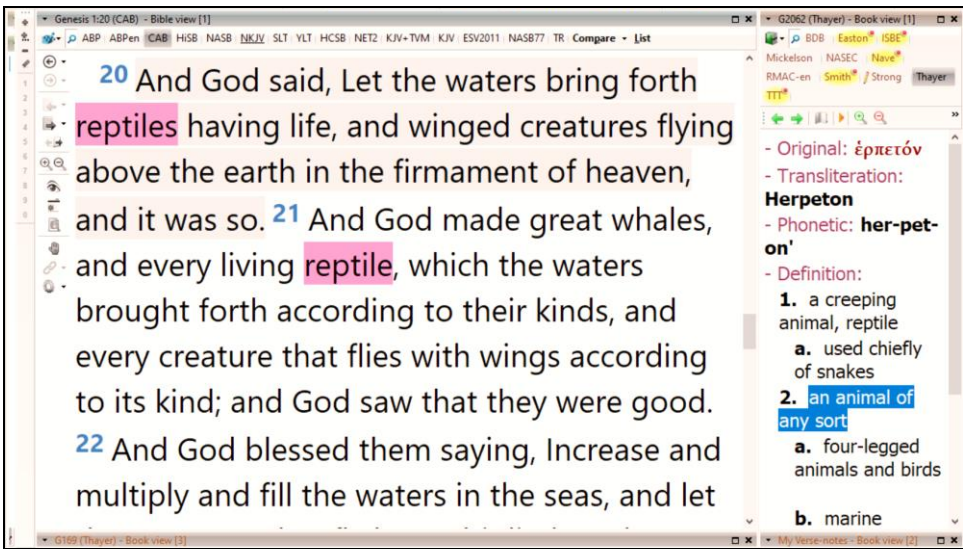
³² Leviticus 11:29-31



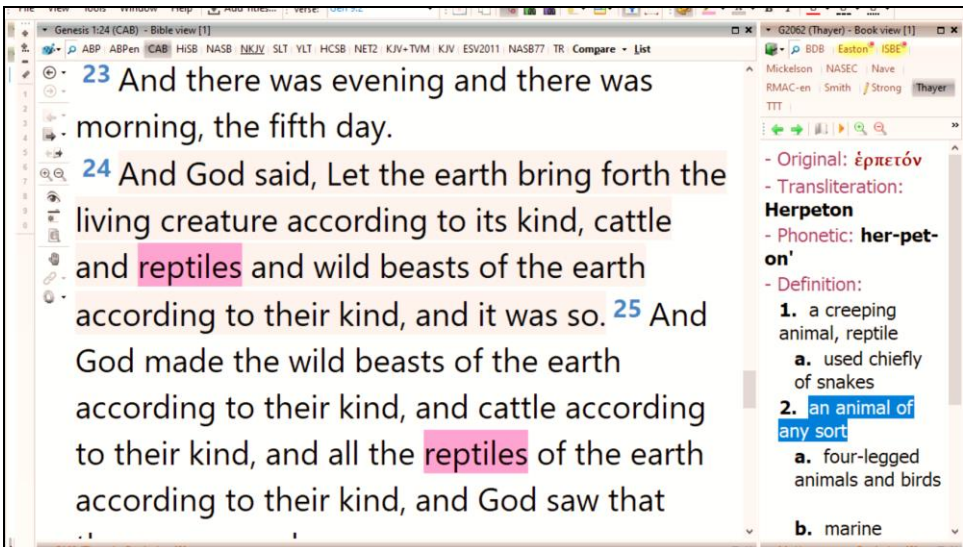
Clearly, these animals that GOD classified as “**her-pet-on**” are not reptiles, as we would know them! And we can also see that the word “**her-pet-on**” is used in several other passages in ways that equally demonstrate that it means much more than “**reptile**”.

For instance: It is written: **And God said, “Let the waters bring forth her-pet-on’ having life, and winged creatures flying above the earth in the firmament of heaven”, and it was so. And God made great whales, and every living her-pet-on’, which the waters brought forth according to their kinds, and every creature that flies with wings according to its kind; and God saw that they were good.**³³, the Greek word “**her-pet-on**” can indicate *marine animals*; but it can also indicate certain *land animals*, just as it is used in Leviticus 11.

³³ Genesis 1:20-21



In fact, we can find other connections of this word to land animals when the Bible records: **God said, “Let the earth bring forth the living creature according to its kind, cattle and her-pet-on and wild beasts of the earth according to their kind”, and it was so.**³⁴



Thus, all of these Septuagint passages and more, along with the context of GOD’s words to Noah reveal, we should seek the broadest meaning of the word “**her-pet-on**” in Genesis 9:3, just as Hebrew

³⁴ Genesis 1:24

scholars use the broadest meaning of the word “**reh'-mes**” in that passage.

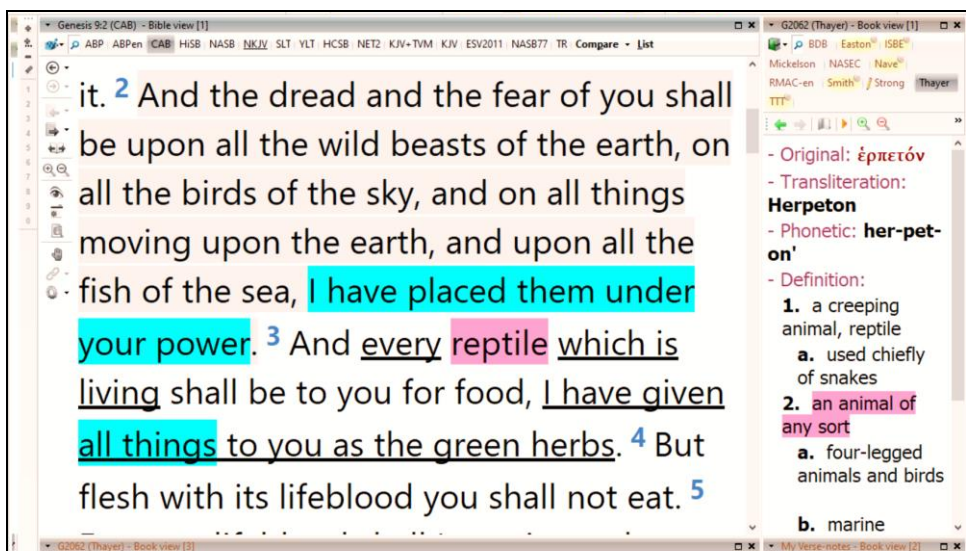
The screenshot shows a Bible software window with the following text: "Under *your* hands I have given *them* to you. ³ And every reptile which is living shall be to you for food; as [³ vegetation of grass ¹ I have given ⁵ to you ² all]. ⁴ Except [³ meat ⁴ with ⁵ *the* blood ⁶ of life ¹ you shall not ² eat]. ⁵ For even your blood -- of the *blood* of your lives at *the* hand of all the wild beasts I shall require it, and from *the* hand of a man's brother I shall

The sidebar on the right provides the following information for the Greek word **ἑρπετόν** (herpeton):

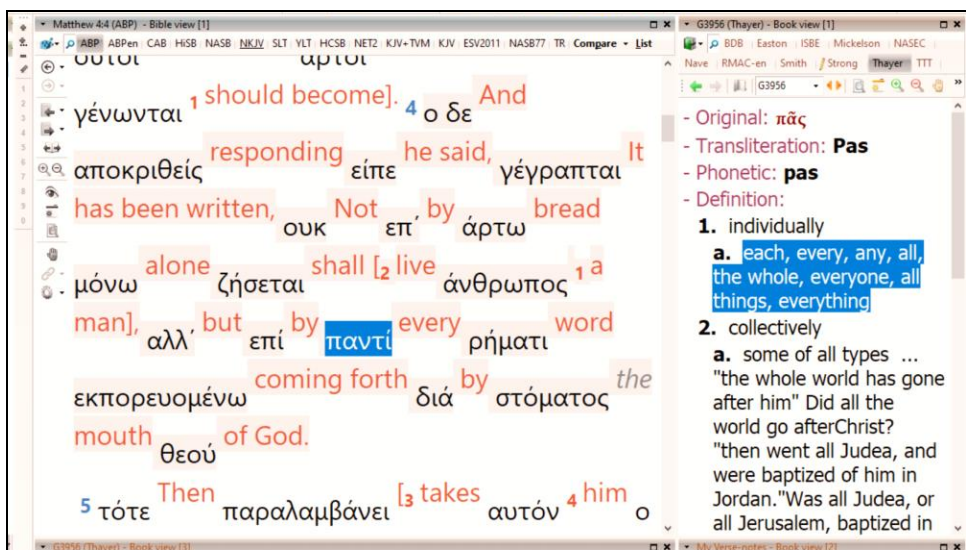
- Original: ἑρπετόν
- Transliteration: Herpeton
- Phonetic: her-pet-on'
- Definition:
 1. a creeping animal, reptile
 - a. used chiefly of snakes
 2. an animal of any sort
 - a. four-legged animals and birds
 - b. marine

And this is confirmed when we read the Septuagint passage in context because once again it says: **The dread and the fear of you shall be upon all the wild beasts of the earth, on all the birds of the sky, and on all things moving upon the earth, and upon all the fish of the sea, I have given them to you. And every her-pet-on' which is living shall be food for you. I have given all things to you even as the green herbs, but flesh with its lifeblood you shall not eat.³⁵**

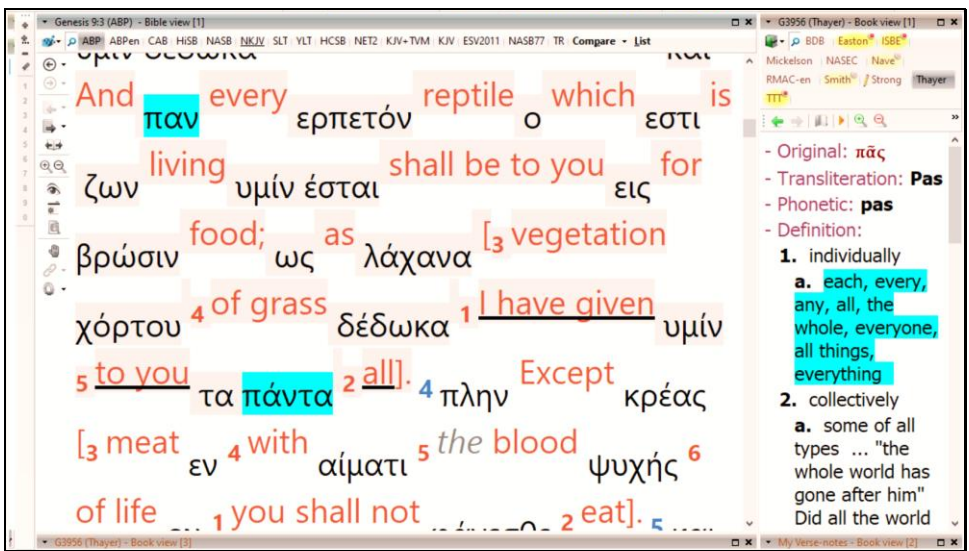
³⁵ Genesis 9:2-4 CAB



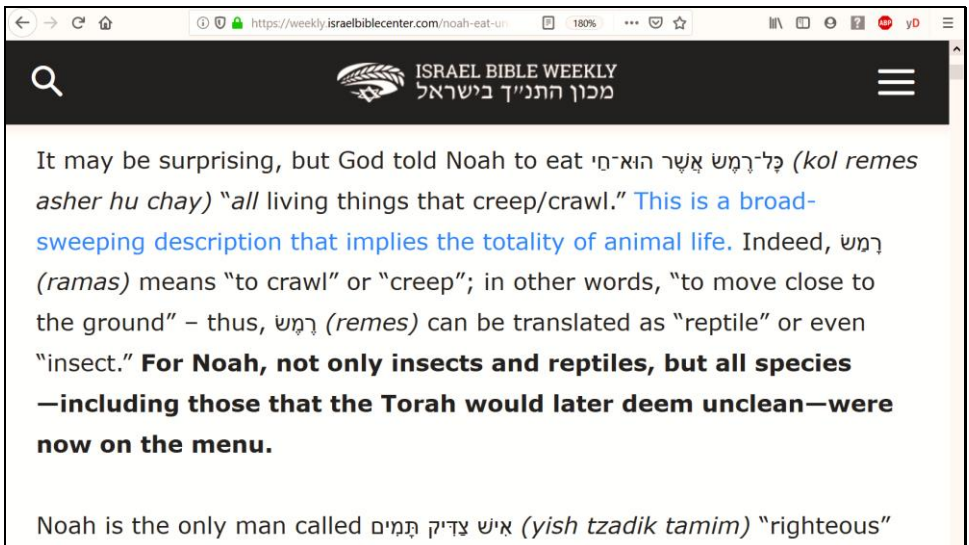
Now, do you remember the Greek word our MESSIAH used, when He said: “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.”?



Well, that same all-inclusive word that means: “**every, all, everyone, or everything**”, was used in the Septuagint when GOD told Noah: “I have given all things to you even as the green herbs, but flesh with its lifeblood you shall not eat”!



But, just in case you meet someone who doesn't seem to recognize the very broad language GOD used in Genesis chapter 9, I should explain that they might incorrectly claim that "Noah could only eat Levitically clean animals"! And they might possibly point to Genesis chapter 7 to try to prove this claim.



However, before we go to the passage that some people refer to in order to claim that Noah only ate clean animals, we should point out: since Noah was told he could eat of "every living her-pet-on", but Leviticus (in the Septuagint that JESUS knew as His Bible) lists many

different types of **her-pet-on'** that were unclean, GOD clearly gave Noah a broader menu than the one contained in Leviticus chapter 11.

Genesis 9:3 LXX	Leviticus 11 LXX
<p>every her-pet-on' which is living shall be to you for food; as the vegetation of grass I have given to you all</p>	<p>All the her-pet-on' of the winged creatures which go upon fours, it is an abomination to you. V.20 every her-pet-on' of the winged creatures which are of four feet -- it is an abomination to you. V.23 And these are unclean to you of the her-pet-on', of the ones moving upon the earth: the weasel, and the mouse...and chameleon, and newt, and lizard, and mole. These are unclean to you from out of all the her-pet-on'.... V. 29-31 And every her-pet-on' which crawls upon the earth, this is an abomination to you...all going upon the belly, and all going upon fours always, which is numerous in feet among all the her-pet-on' crawling upon the earth -- you shall not eat it... V. 41-42 And you shall not defile your souls among all the her-pet-on' moving upon the earth. V. 44b</p>

And with that issue understood, we can turn to Genesis chapter 7, where it is written: **“You shall take with you seven each of every clean animal, a male and his female; two each of animals that are unclean, a male and his female...”**³⁶ Based on this passage, some people try to argue that Noah could not have eaten any of the unclean animals after Genesis chapter 9, or they would have ceased to exist.

But this claim would seem to neglect the fact that Noah was on the Ark for a little over a year, and unclean animals tend to reproduce like: well... rabbits! In fact, unlike cows, sheep, goats, and deer, pigs, dogs, cats, rabbits and other Levitically unclean animals give birth to much larger litters.

³⁶ Genesis 7:2

Genesis 7:11

In **the six hundredth year** of Noah's life, **in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month**, on that day all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.

Genesis 8:13-14

And it came to pass **in the six hundred and first year**, in the first month, the first day of the month, that the waters were dried up from the earth; and Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and indeed the surface of the ground was dry. And **in the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month**, the earth was dried.

According to reliable sources, a single pair of pigs can produce two litters a year. Plus, if the sow is well-fed, those litters can have at least 10 piglets. So, this is why pig farming has always been considered so profitable and popular.

per sow per year.

By the 1990s, almost all breeding herds were achieving 20 pigs per sow per year. Today, many systems are hitting 25 pigs per sow per year, and some are on the threshold of 30 pigs per sow per year, reaching that level for weeks, and individual sows are achieving 40 pigs per sow per year, he observes.

Sure, weaned pig, sow feed and liquid propane fuel costs have risen

But when faced with these specifics, it is possible that some Christians who don't recognize the fact that GOD gave Noah a menu that included **"all things"** might reply: "Why would GOD have Noah take 'seven of every clean animal, but only two of each of the animals that are unclean' if it was not for post-flood food purposes?"

And to that excellent question, we can reply: “The answer is found in Genesis chapter 8”! There it is written: **“Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.”**³⁷

Chronologically *before* GOD ever told Noah that he could eat meat and *after* the last thing GOD had said about what mankind could eat was: **“you shall eat the herb of the field”**, Noah demonstrated by his sacrifices *why* he needed more clean animals than unclean animals; even if he could eat them *both*.

And we see that same reason demonstrated in another place in the vegan pre-flood world when Genesis records: **Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD. Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering.**³⁸

Abel’s parents were told in Genesis chapter 3, after the fall: **“you shall eat the herb of the field”**, yet Abel raised flocks! And the reason he did this was, even before mankind was permitted to eat meat, mankind made sacrifices to GOD!

Therefore, because those sacrifices must forever be of the “clean” animal kinds, Noah needed more of the clean animals; particularly since they reproduce in smaller numbers than the unclean animals.

So, you see, *sacrifices* explain why an originally vegan Noah knew about clean and unclean animals! And *sacrifices*, along with slower reproduction rates for clean animals, explain why Noah needed more of those clean animals on the ark!

And we should note that twice *before* Genesis 9, GOD clearly knew how to describe clean and unclean animals! However, that language (which undeniably pre-existed Genesis chapter 9) was not used when GOD told Noah what he could *eat*!

³⁷ Genesis 8:20

³⁸ Genesis 4:2-5

Surely, GOD knows how to communicate in a plain and indisputable way! And when He told Noah: **“I have given all things to you even as the green herbs, but flesh with its lifeblood you shall not eat”**, we must not read Leviticus 11 back onto this text!

No, instead we must recognize that Scripture declares: Adam and Eve were given a *different menu* than Noah. And Noah was most certainly given a *different menu* than the one that is presented in Leviticus chapter 11.

Genesis 9:3 LXX	Leviticus 11 LXX
<p>every her-pet-on' which is living shall be to you for food; as the vegetation of grass I have given to you all</p>	<p>All the her-pet-on' of the winged creatures which go upon fours, it is an abomination to you. V.20 every her-pet-on' of the winged creatures which are of four feet -- it is an abomination to you. V.23 And these are unclean to you of the her-pet-on', of the ones moving upon the earth: the weasel, and the mouse...and chameleon, and newt, and lizard, and mole. These are unclean to you from out of all the her-pet-on'.... V. 29-31 And every her-pet-on' which crawls upon the earth, this is an abomination to you...all going upon the belly, and all going upon fours always, which is numerous in feet among all the her-pet-on' crawling upon the earth -- you shall not eat it... V. 41-42 And you shall not defile your souls among all the her-pet-on' moving upon the earth. V. 44b</p>

And these changing menus are perfectly understandable when we apply the obvious Biblical principles of *progressive revelation* and *discontinuity* within Scripture. Especially when it comes to issues regarding **“foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances like circumcision”**³⁹.

But *only* when we apply these foundational principles of progressive revelation and discontinuity, can we *fully* love GOD with all of our being and our neighbor as ourselves, which requires: living by *every* word of the Holy Scriptures as they were *chronologically* given within all of the Bible and the Bible alone.

³⁹ Hebrews 9:10

Chapter 2: Non-Abrogated Continuance

Previously, we established directly from Scripture how “loving GOD” and “keeping His commandments” are Biblically identical. And we also confirmed that “loving our neighbor” and “keeping GOD’s commandments” are also Biblically identical. So, we expressed these facts as an equation that states: keeping GOD’s commandments is the equivalent of loving GOD and our neighbor.

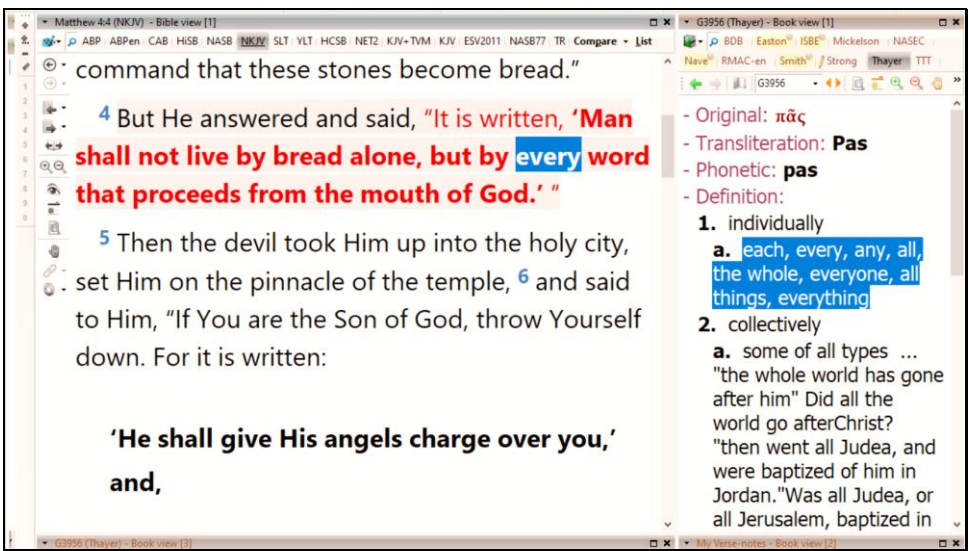


By doing this, we proved from Scripture how we are not free to define for ourselves what it means to “*love GOD with all our being*” or to “*love our neighbor as ourselves*” because only GOD’s Word can define what such ‘love’ actually looks like.⁴⁰

Then, once we established the fact that *every* descendant of Adam must live by **every** word that proceeds from the mouth of GOD⁴¹, we learned about three very important subjects that every student of the Bible must fully understand; and those subjects were: progressive revelation, discontinuity, and the continuity debate.

⁴⁰ 1 John 5:2-3

⁴¹ Matthew 4:4



The first verses of the book of Hebrews are teaching us about progressive revelation, as they explain: **GOD, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son.**⁴² Yes, GOD has revealed His Word to His people through His prophets progressively, line upon line, precept by precept, time after time, culminating in the revelation of His Son through the witness of His chosen Disciples and Apostles.

So, JESUS said to His disciples: **“I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.”**⁴³ This statement is true because of the Biblical principle of progressive revelation! The holy prophets who wrote some of GOD’s amazing revelations of Himself to mankind desired to hear and see certain later revelations in their lifetimes, but the Apostles were chosen to hear and reveal those things to the world at a later time.

Meanwhile, progressive revelation occasionally leads to *discontinuity* when GOD uses things like fleshly circumcision to reveal we must be circumcised in heart, or a fleshly priesthood to reveal how His Son is our eternal High Priest. So, Hebrews explains: **For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law. For He of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe,**

⁴² Hebrews 1:1-2
⁴³ Matthew 13:17

from which no man has officiated at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood.⁴⁴ And this *discontinuity* between the Levitical priesthood and the priesthood of JESUS (Who was not of the tribe of Levi) exists because of progressive revelation!

Likewise, the *discontinuity* regarding mandatory physical circumcision is directly related to *progressive revelation* and the New Covenant priesthood of JESUS that allows uncircumcised Gentiles to be grafted into the lineage of Abraham by believing in the MESSIAH.⁴⁵

But these Biblical principles of “discontinuity” and “progressive revelation” caused a great debate to erupt in the Book of Acts in Chapter 15; a controversy that the HOLY SPIRIT settled through the Apostles of the MESSIAH. And this argument that revolves around what requirements of the First Covenant continue into the New Covenant is known as “the Continuity Debate”.

Now within the Continuity Debate, there are four main questions every Christian must answer as they read the Bible: “*Did every aspect of the First Covenant continue on into the New Covenant?*”, “*Did everything but a very limited number of Biblically abrogated (or officially discontinued) items continue on into the New Covenant?*”, “*Did only those aspects that are repeated in the Final 27 Books actually continue on into the New Covenant?*”, or “*Did nothing of the First Covenant continue on into the New Covenant?*”.

Understanding these four basic positions that Christians have expressed over the last two thousand years, and identifying which position was taught by JESUS and His Apostles and Disciples, is vitally important if we desire to think accurately about Biblical interpretation. And to help us remember these four positions, let’s simplify them by summarizing each one with a *distinct keyword* that describes their position on the *continuity* between the Old and the New Covenants.

The first position, which believes *every* aspect of the First Covenant continued on into the New Covenant, could be labeled: “Comprehensive Continuance”.

⁴⁴ Hebrews 7:12-14

⁴⁵ Romans 4:11

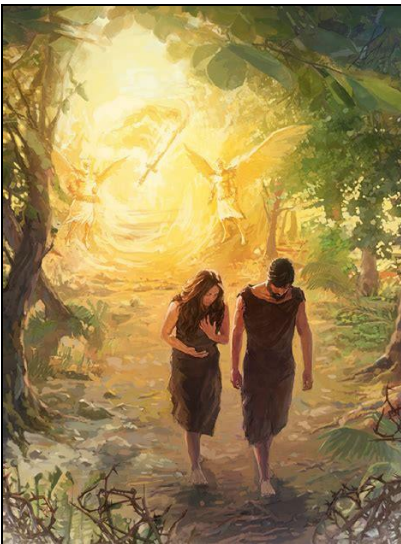
The second position, which believes *everything but a very limited number of Biblically abrogated (or officially discontinued) items* continued on into the New Covenant, could be labeled: “Non-Abrogated Continuance”.

The third position, which believes only those aspects that are *repeated* in the Final 27 Books actually continued on into the New Covenant, could be labeled: “Repeated Continuance”.

And the fourth position, which believes *nothing* of the First Covenant continued on into the New Covenant, could be labeled: “Zero Continuance”.

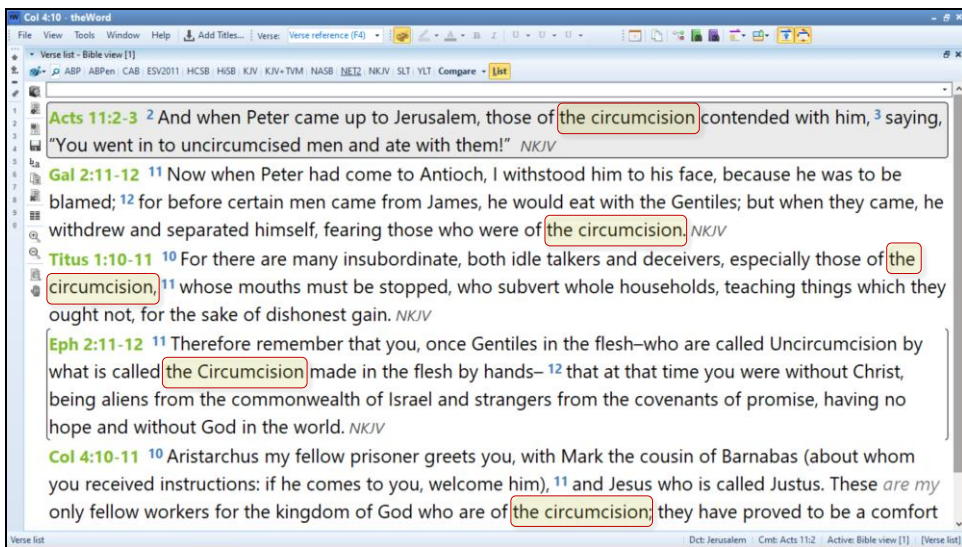
3 of those 4 perspectives regarding the Continuity Debate recognize the Biblical principle of discontinuity and admit that things like mandatory physical circumcision and the Levitical priesthood have been discontinued in the New Covenant. But the first perspective of comprehensive continuance fails to account for any items of discontinuity.

For this reason, we have examined together several examples of discontinuity in GOD’s Word, such as how Adam and Eve’s access to the tree of life was *discontinued* in Genesis chapter 3, how the “vegetation-only diet” of the pre-flood world was *discontinued* in Genesis chapter 9, how the broad, omnivorous diet of Genesis 9 was *discontinued* in Leviticus chapter 11, and even how physical circumcision was *discontinued* as a necessity in the New Covenant.

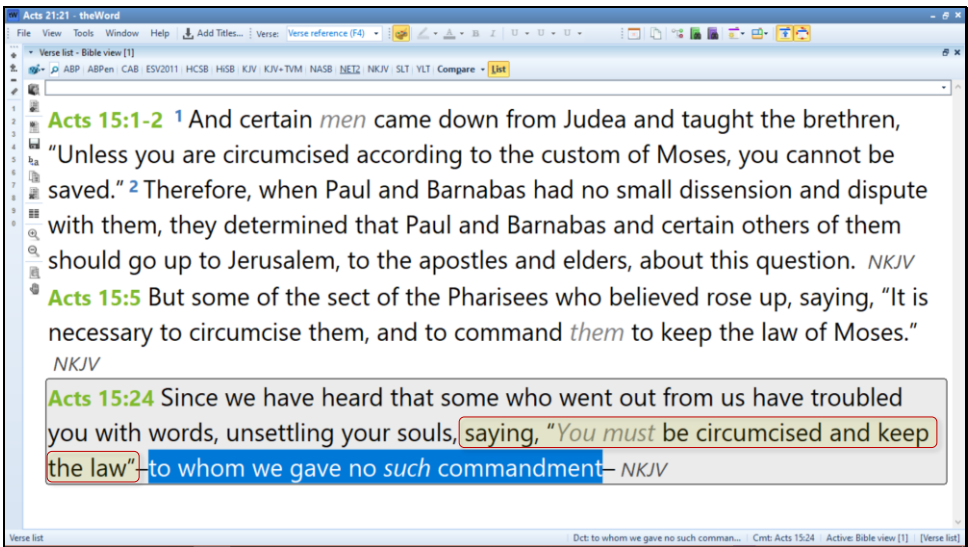


- **Adam and Eve’s access to the Tree of Life was discontinued in Genesis chapter 3**
- **The “vegetation-only diet” of the pre-flood world was discontinued in Genesis chapter 9**
- **The broad, omnivorous diet of Genesis 9 was discontinued in Leviticus chapter 11**
- **Physical circumcision was discontinued as a necessity in the New Covenant**

But those who ignore such items of discontinuity and stubbornly hold to the “Comprehensive Continuance” point of view often refuse to recognize these obvious discontinuities within GOD’s progressively revealed Word. And anyone who holds to the “Comprehensive Continuance” view would be what Scripture frequently labels: “The Circumcision” because they insist on certain discontinued items such as mandatory physical circumcision.



Therefore, they would wrongly insist that every follower of JESUS CHRIST must *eventually* keep all of the fleshly requirements of the Levitical Law, even though the Apostles openly refuted that position in Acts chapter 15.



Meanwhile, those who hold to the Comprehensive Continuance position in the Continuity Debate would attempt to defend their position by *dismissing* or *explaining away* all of the various later passages of the Bible that officially declare: fleshly ordinances like physical circumcision are no longer necessary. So, in error, they give more weight to the writings of Moses than they do the writings of the Apostles.

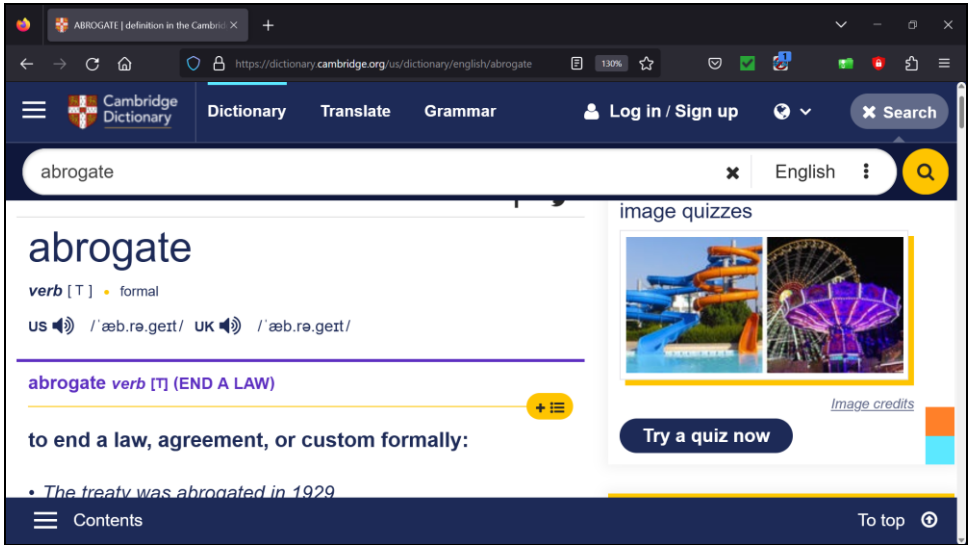
Those of the Comprehensive Continuance might deny:

- Noah could eat "every moving thing"
- Peter's heavenly vision of the sheet, where he was shown "all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air" and told: "Rise, kill, and eat" was about food
- The Jerusalem Council of Acts 15 decided Gentile converts did not need to be circumcised, and they did not need to follow all of the Levitical customs concerned with foods, drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances that were imposed until the time of reformation
- Physical circumcision was discontinued as a necessity in the New Covenant

But giving more weight to the writings of Moses than the testimony of the Apostles denies GOD the right to abrogate certain fleshly

ordinances such as the ones that pertain to foods and drinks, various washings, circumcision, or Levitical priests.

Now, the word “abrogate” means “to officially or formally end a law, agreement, or ordinance”; and only GOD can abrogate a law or an ordinance He instituted. But we must not deny GOD the right to abrogate whatever He chooses to abrogate!



Some synonyms for the word “abrogate” are to “repeal, cancel, or annul” a decree, law, or ordinance. And the Bible specifically speaks about GOD annulling a commandment in Hebrews chapter 7.

Using the Greek word ath-et'-ay-sis, which means “abolition, disannulling, put away, or rejection”, Hebrews describes the change from the Levitical priesthood to the priesthood of the MESSIAH and explains: **For on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness, for the law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, there is the bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.**⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Hebrews 7:14-19

The screenshot shows a Bible software window titled "Heb 7:18 - theWord". The main text area displays Hebrew text with English translations. Verse 14 states: "For *it is* evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood." Verse 15 continues: "And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest" Verse 16: "who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life." Verse 17: "For He testifies: **“You *are* a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek.”**" Verse 18: "For on the one hand there is an **annulling** of the former commandment because of its weakness and **unprofitableness**," Verse 19: "for the law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, *there is the* bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God."

A dictionary window is open on the right, showing the entry for "Athetesis":

- Original: ἀθέτησις
- Transliteration: **Athetesis**
- Phonetic: **ath-et'-ay-sis**
- Definition: **1. abolition, disannulling, put away, rejection**
- Origin: from G114
- TDNT entry: 10:38,1
- Part(s) of speech: Noun Feminine

Yes, Scripture itself describes GOD annulling the commandment that established the exclusivity of the Levitical priesthood! And those who believe GOD annulled certain laws and ordinances fall into either the 2nd, 3rd, or 4th category when discussing the Continuity Debate.

While the Comprehensive Continuance position denies the annulment of any aspects of the First Covenant, all three of the other positions acknowledge some items were annulled or abrogated. But they disagree on who gets to decide if an aspect of the First Covenant was annulled. If GOD alone decides, then, as the authority that issued the command, He will officially announce the abrogated items. However, if mankind decides, then mankind will arbitrarily try to exercise the authority GOD alone possesses, by claiming only the repeated items or no items at all continue into the New Covenant.

-
- 1) "Did every aspect of the First Covenant continue on into the New Covenant?" Comprehensive Continuance**
- 2) "Did everything but a very limited number of Biblically abrogated (or officially discontinued) items continue on into the New Covenant?" Non-Abrogated Continuance**
- 3) "Did only those aspects that are repeated in the Final 27 Books actually continue on into the New Covenant?" Repeated Continuance**
- 4) "Did nothing of the First Covenant continue on into the New Covenant?" Zero Continuance**
- TORN VEIL

Meanwhile, all three of the partial “*continuance*” positions would all point to the numerous places within the Final 27 Books of the Bible where Christians were plainly told they did not have to be circumcised in the New Covenant.

All but the “Comprehensive Continuance” position would agree :

- Noah could eat “every moving thing”
- Peter’s heavenly vision of the sheet, where he was shown “all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air” and told: “Rise, kill, and eat” was about food
- The Jerusalem Council of Acts 15 decided Gentile converts did not need to be circumcised, and they did not need to follow all of the Levitical customs concerned with foods, drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances that were imposed until the time of reformation
- Physical circumcision was discontinued as a necessity in the New Covenant

And this disagreement between the Circumcision Party who holds to the Comprehensive Continuance position in the Continuity Debate, and those who hold to the other three positions boils down to the Biblical principle of Progressive Revelation.

Now, to understand the Biblical concept of progressive revelation, we must begin by defining the word “chronological”. And Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary defines “chronological” as: “of, relating to, or arranged in, or according to - the order of time”.



And we must understand the word “chronologically”, because: Genesis was written chronologically *before* Exodus, and Leviticus was written chronologically *before* the book of Hebrews. Therefore, when we read the Bible, we have to realize that it was written in a chronological way; or as Hebrews explained: “at various times”! And it is an undeniable fact that GOD had His holy prophets write down certain things *at various times*, because He wanted to progressively reveal the truth to His creation, within a logical, systematic framework.

Job-ca. 1922-975 B.C.
 Genesis-1445-1405 B.C.
 Exodus -1445-1405 B.C.
 Leviticus -1445-1405 B.C.
 Numbers-1445-1405 B.C.
 Deuteronomy-1445-1405 B.C.
 Psalms-1410-450 B.C.
 Joshua-1405-1385 B.C.
 Judges-ca. 1043 B.C.
 Ruth-ca. 1030-1010 B.C.
 Song of Solomon-971-965 B.C.
 Proverbs-ca. 971-686 B.C.
 Ecclesiastes-940-931 B.C.
 1 Samuel-931-722 B.C.
 2 Samuel-931-722 B.C.
 Obadiah-850-840 B.C.
 Joel-835-796 B.C.
 Jonah-ca. 775 B.C.
 Amos-ca. 750 B.C.
 Hosea-750-710 B.C.
 Micah-735-710 B.C.
 Isaiah-700-681 B.C.
 Nahum-ca. 650 B.C.

Zephaniah-635-625 B.C.
 Habakkuk-615-605 B.C.
 Ezekiel-590-570 B.C.
 Lamentations-586 B.C.
 Jeremiah-586-570 B.C.
 1 Kings-561-538 B.C.
 2 Kings-561-538 B.C.
 Daniel 536-530 B.C.
 Haggai-ca. 520 B.C.
 Zechariah-480-470 B.C.
 Ezra-457-444 B.C.
 1 Chronicles-450-430 B.C.
 2 Chronicles-450-430 B.C.
 Esther-450-331 B.C.
 Malachi-433-424 B.C.
 Nehemiah-424-400 B.C.



James-A.D. 44-49
 Galatians-A.D. 49-50
 Matthew-A.D. 50-60
 Mark-A.D. 50-60

1 Thessalonians-A.D. 51
 2 Thessalonians-A.D. 51-52
 1 Corinthians-A.D. 55
 2 Corinthians-A.D. 55-56
 Romans-A.D. 56
 Luke-A.D. 60-61
 Ephesians--A.D. 60-62
 Philippians-A.D. 60-62
 Philemon-A.D. 60-62
 Colossians-A.D. 60-62
 Acts-A.D. 62
 1 Timothy-A.D. 62-64
 Titus-A.D. 62-64
 1 Peter-A.D. 64-65
 2 Timothy-A.D. 66-67
 2 Peter-A.D. 67-68
 Hebrews-A.D. 67-69
 Jude-A.D. 68-70
 John-A.D. 80-90
 1 John-A.D. 90-95
 2 John-A.D. 90-95
 3 John-A.D. 90-95
 Revelation-A.D. 94-96

But, in these last days, GOD has spoken to us by His Son! So, the Book of Hebrews explains how much greater JESUS is than Moses, the angels, the Levites, and much more, to demonstrate the principle of progressive revelation.

Genesis begins by describing how *GOD created all things in the beginning*. And, through the first 2 chapters of the first book of the Bible, we learn the origins of the earth, the stars, the sun, the moon, the animals, mankind, and even the Sabbath.

But after we learn how GOD made a “*very good*” world, with no suffering, death, sin, or pain; we *then* see how Adam and Eve’s sin brought those things into the world. And, the origin of evil, decay, and death are explained.

Then, *as Genesis continues*; we read how GOD graciously saved the family of a righteous man named Noah from a wicked world through a flood, we read how GOD called a righteous man named Abraham to become a mighty nation, and we read how the descendants of Abraham ended up in Egypt during a time of great famine.

Then, in the book of Exodus, we read how GOD sent a chosen man named Moses to guide His people to freedom. And the second book of the Holy Bible describes how GOD made a covenant with His people after He took them by the hand to lead them out of slavery. But Exodus *also* reveals that they were free to: “keep that covenant and

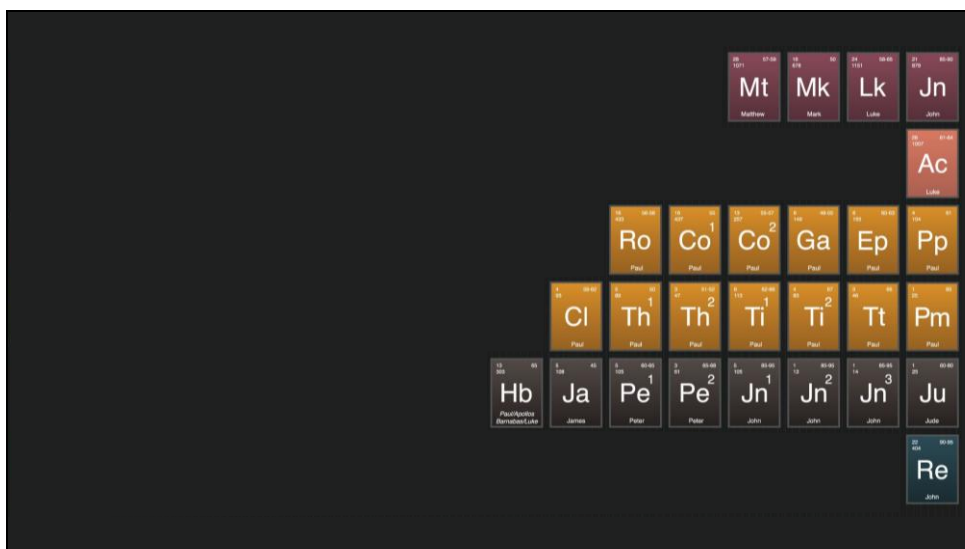
inherit His promises”, or “break that covenant and die in the wilderness”.

Yes, when we properly understand the Bible, each infallible, inspired, authoritative book *builds* onto the books that came before it! And those who accept the principle of progressive revelation (which is obviously taught to us by Scripture) understand that the last word on any particular subject takes precedence over whatever was said before about that same subject.

Meanwhile, we must note at this point, modern Bibles are not organized with all of the books in perfect Chronological order. No, tradition has played a major role in how the Books of the Bible are organized, so we must keep in mind the chronology of the Bible as we read each book, to apply the principles of progressive revelation.

Also, it is very important for us to realize that JESUS, the ultimate revelation, was foreshadowed and spoken of throughout nearly all of the earlier books of the Bible! And those books were prophesying of how GOD would send His only begotten Son into the world, to make us children of Abraham, to lead us into freedom from sin’s slavery, to become our High Priest, to conquer all of our enemies, to be our eternal King, and to save us all from sin and death and hell! And that principle of “*Messianic Foreshadowing*” is critical to understanding the concept of “*Progressive Revelation*”.

For example, please imagine that the Holy Bible did not include the First 39 Books. Could you imagine the confusion that would exist if the Bible began with Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John?



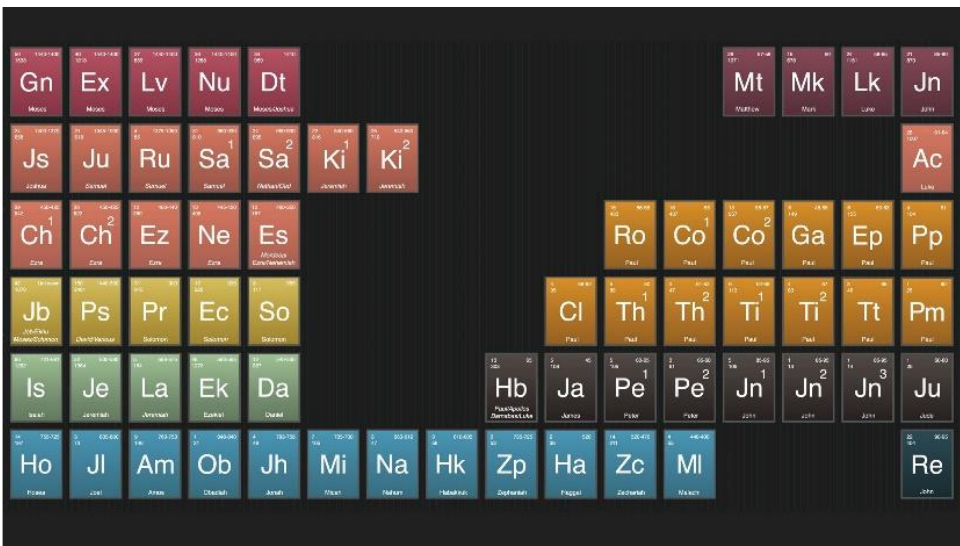
How could we ever possibly understand why JESUS would offer Himself up as a sacrifice for our sins if He first did not establish a sacrificial system of atonement in Exodus and Leviticus?

And how could we possibly *know what sin actually was*⁴⁷, and why we needed to be forgiven for it if we could not read what GOD defined as sin in Exodus and Leviticus?

In fact, how could we understand the concept: “**The wages of sin are death**” if we first did not read how GOD’s justice demanded that sinners be stoned to death when they refused to keep His commandments?

Truly, the Gospel of JESUS CHRIST makes no sense without *the foundation* of the First 39 Books of the Bible! And the New Covenant can never be understood correctly if we don’t look to the First Covenant to perfectly foreshadow it!

⁴⁷ 1 John 3:4

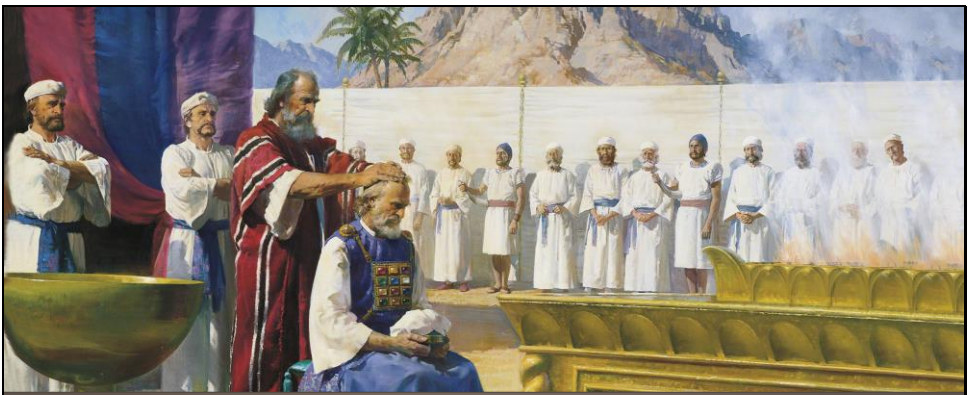


But we must not think that GOD made any mistakes when He made the First Covenant! No, when GOD instructed Moses: how to build the Tabernacle, establish the priesthood, perform the sacrifices, cleanse the people, and much more, GOD was setting the stage for us to truly understand the role JESUS, the Son of GOD, would fill in the New Covenant.

And, this statement is not just an opinion or a debatable perspective! No, the statement that the First Covenant was intentionally foreshadowing the New Covenant is a Biblical fact!

Because it is written: **For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect.**⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Hebrews 10:1



For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. Hebrews 10:1

The book of Hebrews makes it clear that *“the law” could not make anyone perfect, because it only contained the shadow of the good things JESUS would bring.*



Therefore, if perfection were through **the Levitical priesthood** (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron? For **the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law.** Hebrews 7:11-12

However, we should make it clear at this point, if you read the book of Hebrews from beginning to end you realize: when the writer mentions “the law” they are specifically referencing the Levitical System of cleansing and atonement instituted in the First Covenant, not the moral decrees and commandments of our GOD!

In fact, the phrase “*the Law*” in the Final 27 Books of the Bible most commonly seems to be referring to *the Levitical Laws* concerned with ritual cleansing⁴⁹, NOT the commandments of GOD that deal with our relationship to Him and our relationship to our neighbor.

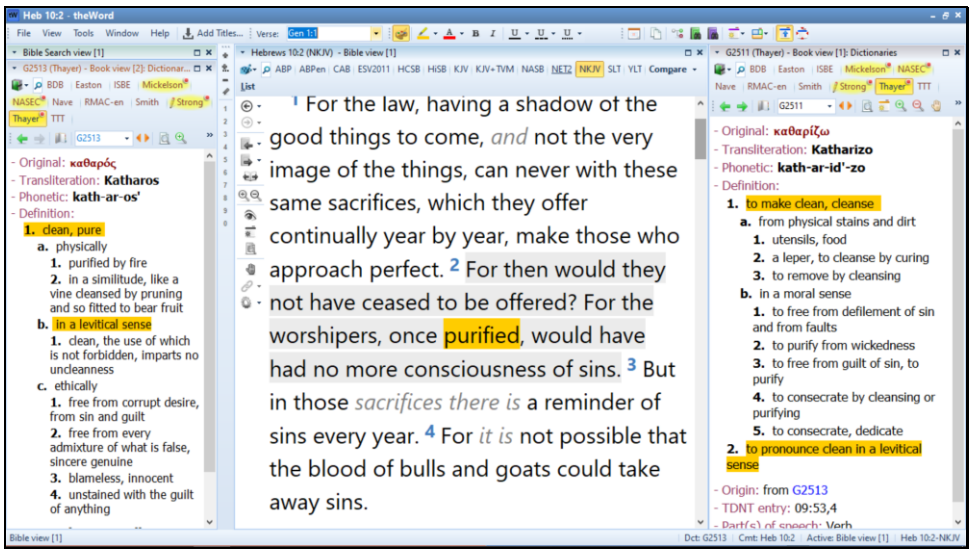
Therefore, when Hebrews indicates that the Law had only “a shadow of the good things to come, but not the very substance” we must not misunderstand what the word “Law” is referring to here. Instead, we must understand that Hebrews was labeling the Levitical System, with its earthly Tabernacle, its earthly priesthood, and its earthly foods, drinks, washings, and fleshly ordinances - “the Law”!

Now, with this understood, we see: after making it clear that the Levitical Law was merely “*foreshadowing*” the New Covenant priesthood of the MESSIAH - Scripture adds: **For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. But in those sacrifices, there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.**⁵⁰

The key word we must notice in this passage about the Levitical Law is the *verb* that Scripture uses to indicate *what exactly those Levitical Laws were designed for*. And that *verb*, which is translated here as “**purified**”, is pronounced: “**kath-ar-id'-zo**”.

⁴⁹ Acts 21:24-25

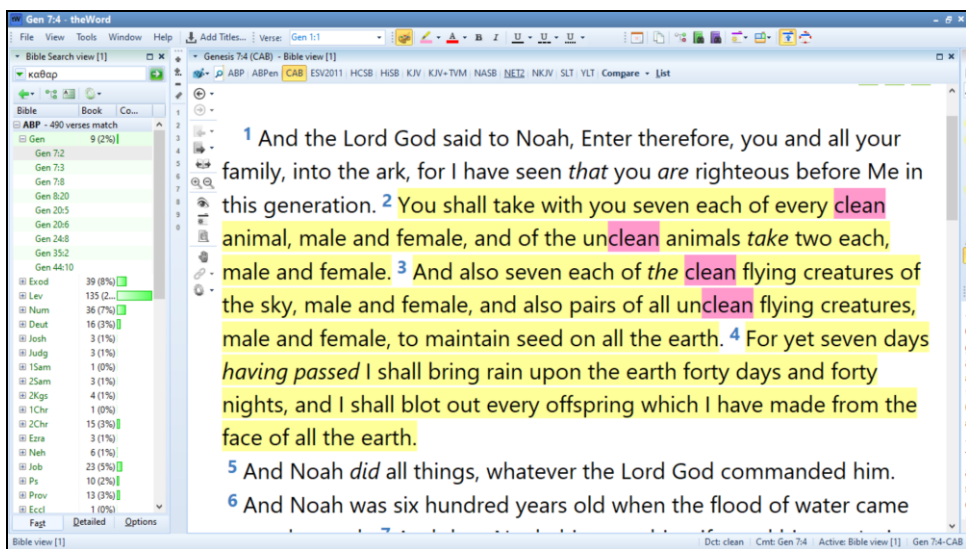
⁵⁰ Hebrews 10:1-4



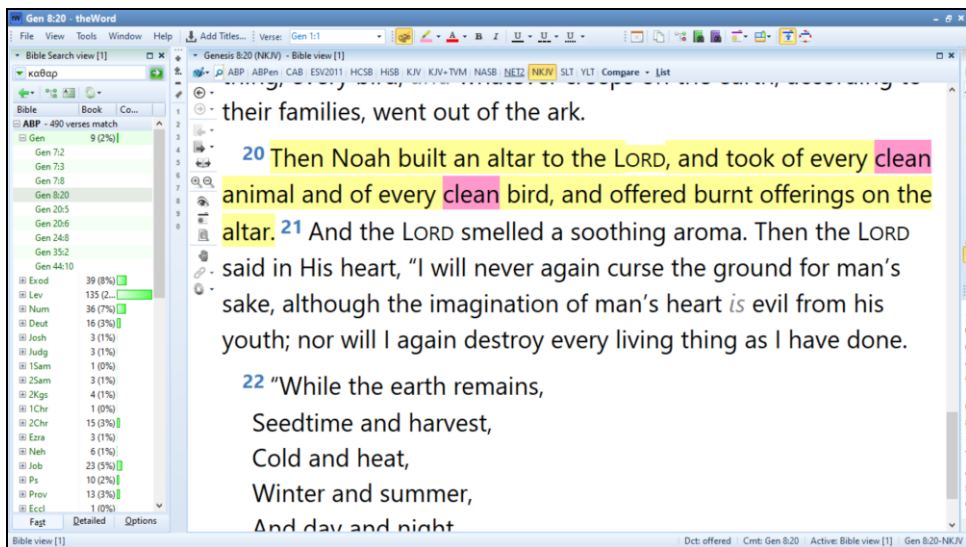
This Greek word, which means: **“to make clean”** or **“to cleanse”**, comes from the Greek root word: **“kath-ar-os”**, which speaks of being clean or pure, in a physical, Levitical, or ethical way.

And the first time this root word appears in Scripture, is in Genesis chapter 7 of the Septuagint, when GOD said to Noah: **“You shall take with you seven each of every clean animal, male and female, and of the unclean animals take two each, male and female. And also seven each of the clean flying creatures of the sky, male and female, and also pairs of all unclean flying creatures, male and female, to maintain seed on all the earth. For yet seven days having passed I shall bring rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights, and I shall blot out every offspring which I have made from the face of all the earth.”**⁵¹

⁵¹ Genesis 7:4

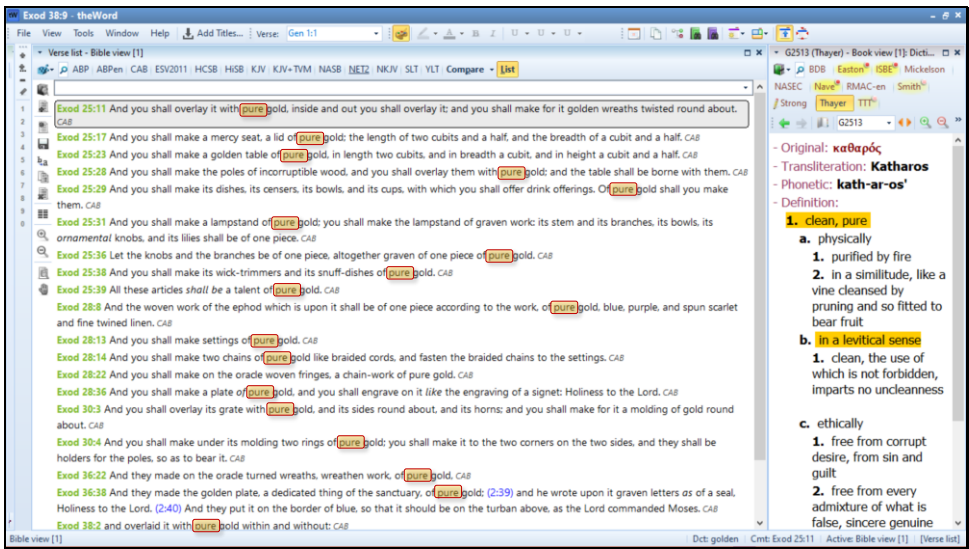


Likewise, this same Greek word is repeated, when Genesis records: **Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.**⁵²



But the first chapter of the Bible that reveals GOD using this word *over and over again* is Exodus 25 when the LORD tells Moses how to build His Tabernacle!

⁵² Genesis 8:20



In the Septuagint that JESUS used as His Bible, the word “**kath-ar-os**” (which means: clean or pure, in an ethical, Levitical, or physical way) was employed to describe the gold that they were to use on the holiest objects of the Tabernacle.

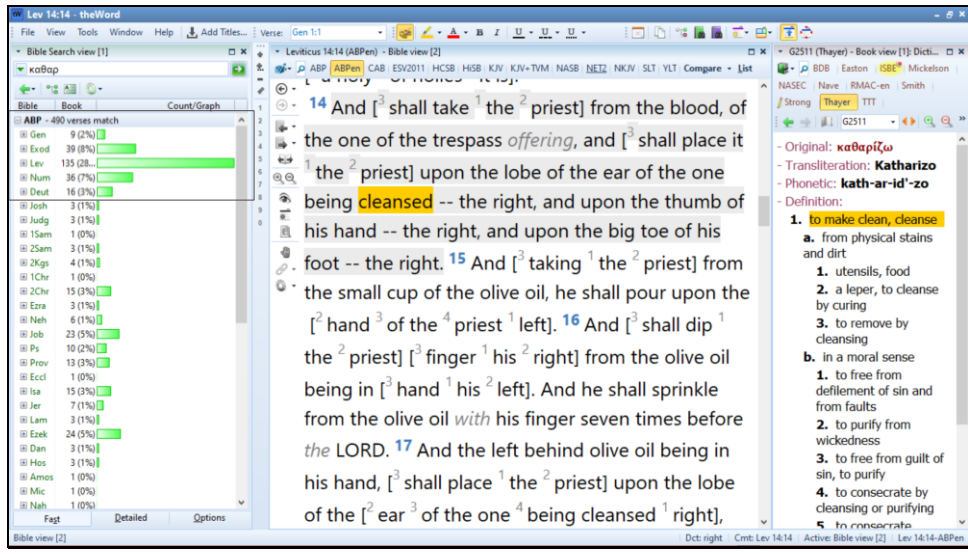
And, based on Numbers 31, we know that Biblically pure gold was gold refined in a fire. For it is written: **“This is the ordinance of the law which the LORD commanded Moses: “Only the gold, the silver, the bronze, the iron, the tin, and the lead, everything that can endure fire, you shall put through the fire, and it shall be clean (or pure); and it shall be purified with the water of purification.”**⁵³

Therefore, in 36 separate verses from Exodus chapter 25 to Exodus chapter 39, GOD commands that the people make His Tabernacle with “clean” or “pure” gold, and keep it “clean” and “pure” with certain Levitical rituals. And within those 36 verses, GOD’s people obey His instructions to the letter.

⁵³ Numbers 31:21-23

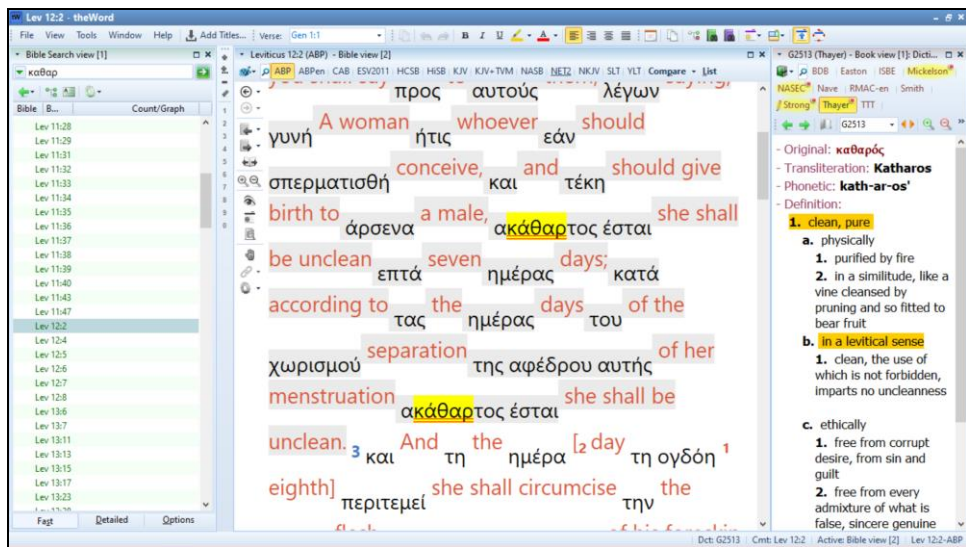
1. Exodus 25:11 "And you shall overlay it with **pure** gold, inside and out you shall overlay it, and shall make on it a molding of gold all around.
2. Exodus 25:17 "You shall make a mercy seat of **pure** gold; two and a half cubits shall be its length and a cubit and a half its width.
3. Exodus 25:24 "And you shall overlay it with **pure** gold, and make a molding of gold all around.
Exodus 25:28 "And you shall make the poles of accacia wood, and overlay them with **pure** gold, that the table may be carried with them.
4. Exodus 25:29 "You shall make its dishes, its pans, its pitchers, and its bowls for pouring. You shall make them of **pure** gold.
5. Exodus 25:31 "You shall also make a lampstand of **pure** gold; the lampstand shall be of hammered work. Its shaft, its branches, its bowls, its ornamental knobs, and flowers shall be of one piece.
6. Exodus 25:36 "Their knobs and their branches shall be of one piece; all of it shall be one hammered piece of **pure** gold.
7. Exodus 25:38 "And its wick-trimmers and their trays shall be of **pure** gold.
8. Exodus 25:39 "It shall be made of a talent of **pure** gold, with all these utensils.
9. Exodus 27:20 "And you shall command the children of Israel that they bring you **pure** oil of pressed olives for the light, to cause the lamp to burn continually.
10. Exodus 28:8 "And the intricately woven band of the ephod, which is on it, shall be of the same workmanship, made of **pure** gold, blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine woven linen.
11. Exodus 28:13 "You shall also make settings of gold.
12. Exodus 28:14 "and you shall make two chains of **pure** gold like braided cords, and fasten the braided chains to the settings.
13. Exodus 28:22 "You shall make chains for the breastplate at the end, like braided cords of **pure** gold.
14. Exodus 28:36 "You shall also make a plate of **pure** gold and engrave on it, like the engraving of a signet: HOLINESS TO THE LORD.
15. Exodus 29:35 "And you shall offer a bull every day as a sin offering for atonement. You shall **cleanse** the altar when you make atonement for it, and you shall anoint it to sanctify it.
16. Exodus 29:37 "Seven days you shall make atonement for the altar and **sanctify** it. And the altar shall be most holy. Whatever touches the altar must be holy.
17. Exodus 30:3 "And you shall overlay its top, its sides all around, and its horns with **pure** gold; and you shall make for it a molding of gold all around.
18. Exodus 30:4 "Two **pure** gold rings you shall make for it, under the molding on both its sides. You shall place them on its two sides, and they will be holders for the poles with which to bear it.
19. Exodus 30:10 And once in the year Aaron shall make atonement on its horns, he shall **purge** it with the blood of purification for their generations: it is most holy to the Lord.
20. Exodus 30:35 "You shall make of these an incense, a compound according to the art of the perfumer, salted, and holy.
21. Exodus 31:8 "the table and its utensils, the **pure** gold lampstand with all its utensils, the altar of incense,
22. Exodus 34:7 "keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means **clearing** the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation."
23. Exodus 37:2 He overlaid it with **pure** gold inside and outside, and made a molding of gold all around it.
24. Exodus 37:6 He also made the mercy seat of **pure** gold; two and a half cubits was its length and a cubit and a half its width.
25. Exodus 37:11 And he overlaid it with **pure** gold, and made a molding of gold all around it.
26. Exodus 37:16 He made of **pure** gold the utensils which were on the table: its dishes, its cups, its bowls, and its pitchers for pouring.
27. Exodus 37:17 He also made the lampstand of **pure** gold; of hammered work he made the lampstand. Its shaft, its branches, its bowls, its ornamental knobs, and its flowers were of the same piece.
28. Exodus 37:22 Their knobs and their branches were of one piece; all of it was one hammered piece of **pure** gold.
29. Exodus 37:23 And he made its seven lamps, its wick-trimmers, and its trays of **pure** gold.
30. Exodus 37:24 Of a talent of **pure** gold he made it, with all its utensils.
31. Exodus 37:26 And he overlaid it with **pure** gold: its top, its sides all around, and its horns. He also made for it a molding of gold all around it.
32. Exodus 37:27 He made two rings of **pure** gold for it under its molding, by its two corners on both sides, as holders for the poles with which to bear it.
33. Exodus 37:29 He also made the holy anointing oil and the **pure** incense of sweet spices, according to the work of the perfumer.
34. Exodus 39:15 And they made chains for the breastplate at the ends, like braided cords of **pure** gold.
35. Exodus 39:30 Then they made the plate of the holy crown of **pure** gold, and wrote on it an inscription like the engraving of a signet: HOLINESS TO THE LORD.
36. Exodus 39:37 the **pure** gold lampstand with its lamps (the lamps set in order), all its utensils, and the oil for light;

But after the Tabernacle was completed, the priests had to minister in the Sanctuary, and the people had to dwell in the same camp as the LORD of Hosts! So, the book of the Bible that describes how they could dwell in the camp with GOD in His holy Tabernacle (at that point in History) uses the word "kath-ar-os" one hundred and 35 times!



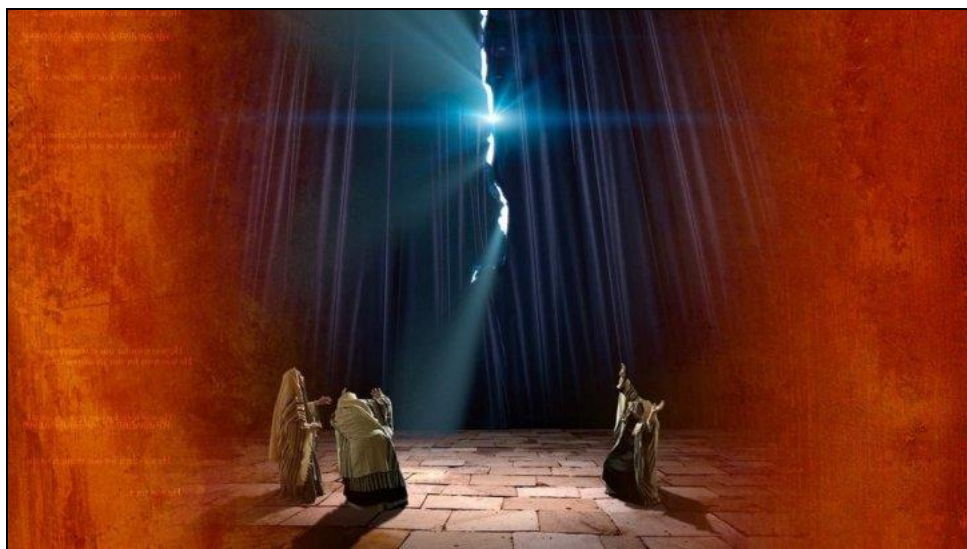
Or, said another way: the book of the Bible where the Greek word for "clean" or "pure" appears more than any other book - is known by the name "Leviticus"! And – no other book of the Bible comes close to using the word "kath-ar-os" nearly as much as it is used in the third

book of the Bible! So, this is why the word “kath-ar-os’ ” is often described as “Levitical cleanness” or “Levitical purification”.



Thus, at a time when the blood of JESUS was not yet available to cleanse the people from their sins, GOD gave them the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of a heifer, along with foods, drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances to cleanse themselves, because GOD walked in their camp!

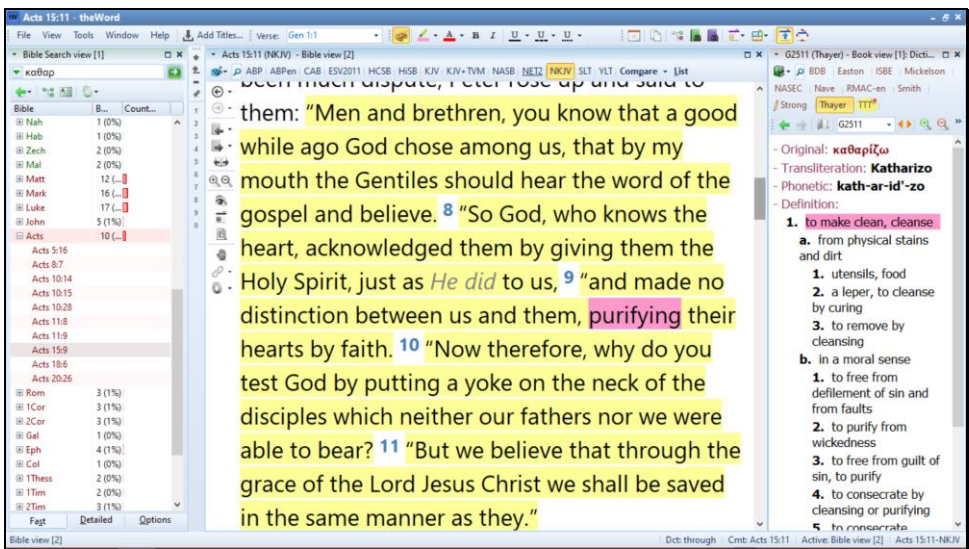
But the Levitical system of purification could not make even the High Priest who performed the services clean enough to enter the Holy of Holies at will. And the fact that even the High Priest of the Levitical covenant could not enter the holy of Holies was pointing out that a better priest would come, with better sacrifices, to open the way into GOD’s presence!



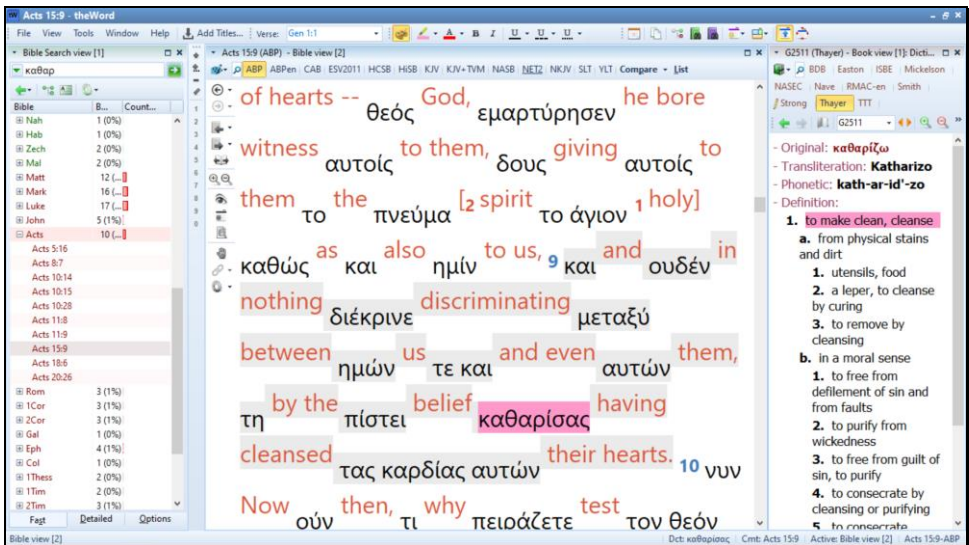
Therefore, while the book of Leviticus describes purification through the Levitical Law that involved foods, drinks, various washings, and other fleshly ordinances, the Final 27 Books of the Holy Bible describe a very different system of purification!

In fact, when the Continuity Debate was addressed by the Apostles and Elders of Jerusalem (in Acts chapter 15) Peter stood up and said: **“Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they.”**⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Acts 15:7-11

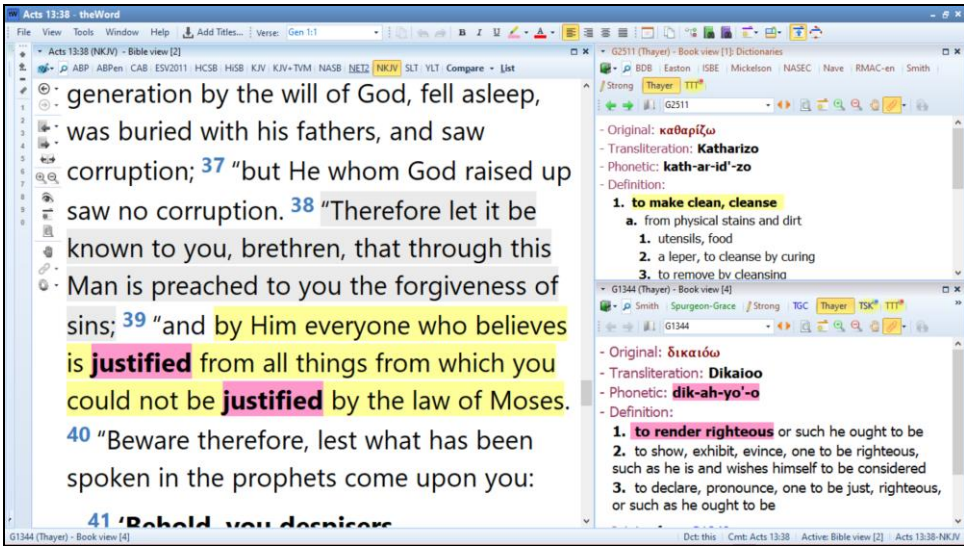


Peter described that GOD *purified* the hearts of the Gentiles by faith, instead of through circumcision and the Levitical Laws of the First Covenant. And the word Peter used here is “kath-ar-id'-zo”!



So, Peter’s point was that the household of Cornelius was cleansed by faith in JESUS CHRIST, to the point that GOD poured out His HOLY SPIRIT into them! But Leviticallly, in the First Covenant, they would have been considered “unclean” because they were uncircumcised, they ate unclean foods, and they came in contact with unclean things.

And Paul once made *the same point* about how the New Covenant in JESUS worked, from a legal perspective when he said: “**By JESUS, everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.**”⁵⁵



You see, the word “dik-ah-yo'-o” that we translate as “justify” means: “to render just, righteous, or innocent”! And it is a parallel word to “kath-ar-id'-zo”, which means “to cleanse”.

And because Peter and Paul, along with the rest of the Apostles and Disciples of our LORD, all taught that mankind could be “purified or justified” by faith in JESUS CHRIST in the New Covenant, they decided (under the guidance of the HOLY SPIRIT) that Gentiles did not need to keep all of the Levitical Laws!

And Levitical Purification was the context of the word “law”, when they wrote: “**The apostles, the elders, and the brethren, To the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia: Greetings. Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, “You must be circumcised and keep the law”–to whom we gave no such commandment– it seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul... who will also report the same things by word of mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us,**

⁵⁵ Acts 13:39

to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.”⁵⁶

“The apostles, the elders, and the brethren, To the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia: Greetings. Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, “You must be circumcised and keep the law”—to whom we gave no such commandment— it seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul.. who will also report the same things by word of mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.” Acts 15:23-29

And because justification or purification by faith in JESUS is the foundation of the Gospel, Paul said Peter was: “not straightforward about the truth of the gospel”, when “before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision.”⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Acts 15:23-29

⁵⁷ Galatians 2:12

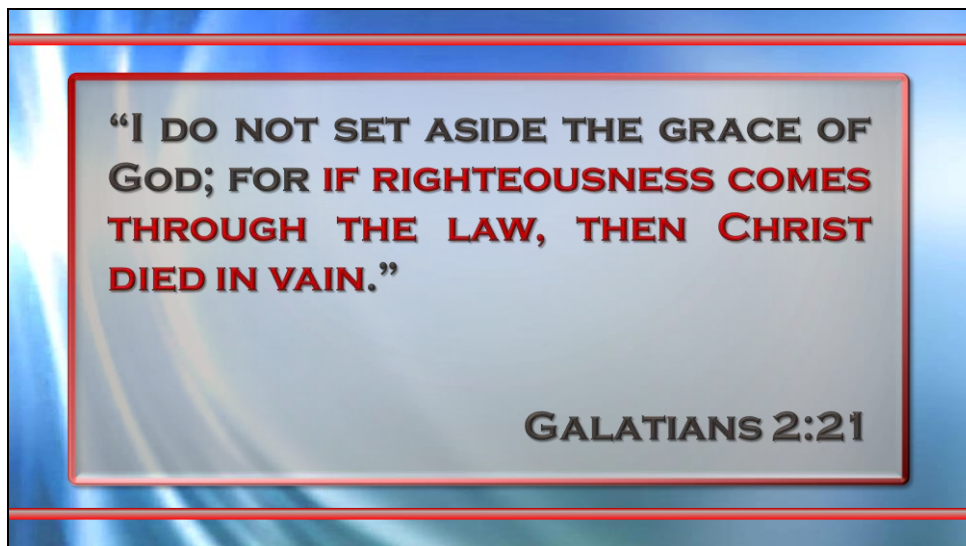
[PETER WAS] “NOT STRAIGHTFORWARD ABOUT THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL”, WHEN “BEFORE CERTAIN MEN CAME FROM JAMES, HE WOULD EAT WITH THE GENTILES; BUT WHEN THEY CAME, HE WITHDREW AND SEPARATED HIMSELF, FEARING THOSE WHO WERE OF THE CIRCUMCISION.” GALATIANS 2:12

Then, because of this serious error, Paul “said to Peter before them all, “If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews? We who are born of the Jews, and not of the Gentile sinners, who know that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law!”⁵⁸

[PAUL] “SAID TO PETER BEFORE THEM ALL, “IF YOU, BEING A JEW, LIVE IN THE MANNER OF GENTILES AND NOT AS THE JEWS, WHY DO YOU COMPEL GENTILES TO LIVE AS JEWS? WE WHO ARE BORN OF THE JEWS, AND NOT OF THE GENTILE SINNERS, WHO KNOW THAT A MAN IS NOT JUSTIFIED BY THE WORKS OF THE LAW BUT BY FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST, EVEN WE HAVE BELIEVED IN CHRIST JESUS, THAT WE MIGHT BE JUSTIFIED BY FAITH IN CHRIST AND NOT BY THE WORKS OF THE LAW!” GALATIANS 2:14-16

⁵⁸ Galatians 2:14-16

And then Paul added: **“I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.”**⁵⁹



You see, there are only two ways to be purified (or justified) according to the Bible! You can seek to be justified or purified by the works of the law contained in Leviticus that were **“concerned only with foods, drinks, various washings, or fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation.”**⁶⁰ Or, you can partake in the New Covenant in JESUS CHRIST, and seek to be justified (or purified) by faith in CHRIST, instead of the works of the law! But only one of these systems of purification can actually *purify* a person spiritually!

And because of one of those systems of purification was discontinued, Paul wrote: **Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law. You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.**⁶¹

⁵⁹ Galatians 2:21

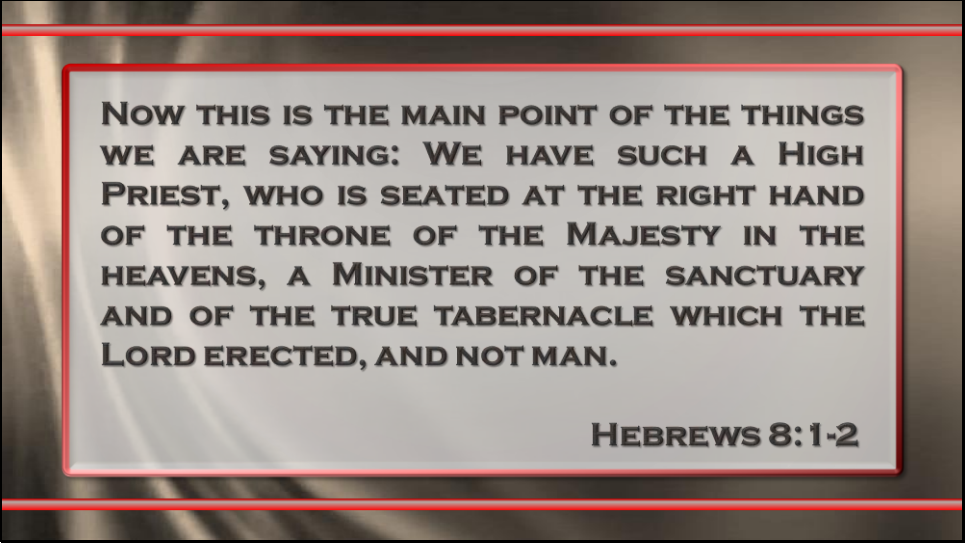
⁶⁰ Hebrews 9:10

⁶¹ Galatians 5:2-6

Obviously, every disciple of JESUS CHRIST has been bought with a price, and they are to love Him by keeping His commandments⁶²! So, when Paul said: “every man who becomes circumcised is a debtor to keep the whole law”, he is speaking of the Levitical laws of purification!

And those who seek to be justified (or purified) by keeping the Levitical laws of purification: have fallen from grace, they have become strangers to the MESSIAH, and the cross of JESUS CHRIST no longer benefits them!

Or, in other words: those who seek to be justified or purified by the foods, drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances of the First Covenant set aside all of the glorious benefits and promises of the New Covenant!



NOW THIS IS THE MAIN POINT OF THE THINGS WE ARE SAYING: WE HAVE SUCH A HIGH PRIEST, WHO IS SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE THRONE OF THE MAJESTY IN THE HEAVENS, A MINISTER OF THE SANCTUARY AND OF THE TRUE TABERNACLE WHICH THE LORD ERECTED, AND NOT MAN.

HEBREWS 8:1-2

And this is why the book of Hebrews so clearly contrasts the two covenants by saying: **Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.**⁶³

⁶² John 14:15, John 14:21, John 15:10, 1 Corinthians 7:19, 1 John 2:3-4, 1 John 3:24, 1 John 5:2-3, Revelation 14:12

⁶³ Hebrews 8:1-2

The Levitical priests could never sit in their roles as ministers in the earthly sanctuary because their work was never complete! But the New Covenant has a far better Priest, who serves a far better Tabernacle, and He sits at the right hand of GOD His Father!

Thus, Hebrews adds: **If He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law; who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, “See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.” But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.⁶⁴**

And Scripture goes on to say: **In that He says, “A new covenant,” He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away. Then indeed, even the first covenant had ordinances of divine service and the earthly sanctuary. For a tabernacle was prepared: the first *part*, in which was the lampstand, the table, and the showbread, which is called the sanctuary; and behind the second veil, the part of the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of All, which had the golden censer and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which were the golden pot that had the manna, Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant.⁶⁵**

But most importantly, while discussing the First Covenant that was then “*growing old and was ready to vanish away*”, Scripture explains: **Now when these things had been thus prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing the services. But into the second part the high priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people’s sins committed in ignorance; the Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing. It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience— concerned only with foods and drinks,**

⁶⁴ Hebrews 8:3-6

⁶⁵ Hebrews 8:13-9:4

various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation.⁶⁶

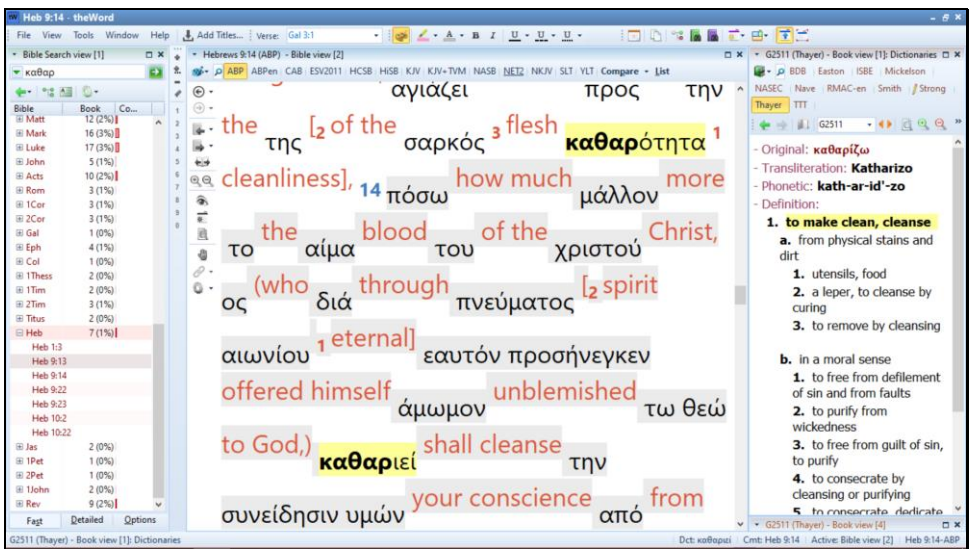
Hebrews just explained that in the First Covenant, even the high priest, the holiest, most ritually pure man in all of Israel, could not enter the Holy of Holies at will! And the Biblical point here is that *the Levitical Law could never perfect anyone and give them access into GOD's presence!*

Thankfully though, the New Covenant that replaced those things is described with the words: **But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?⁶⁷**

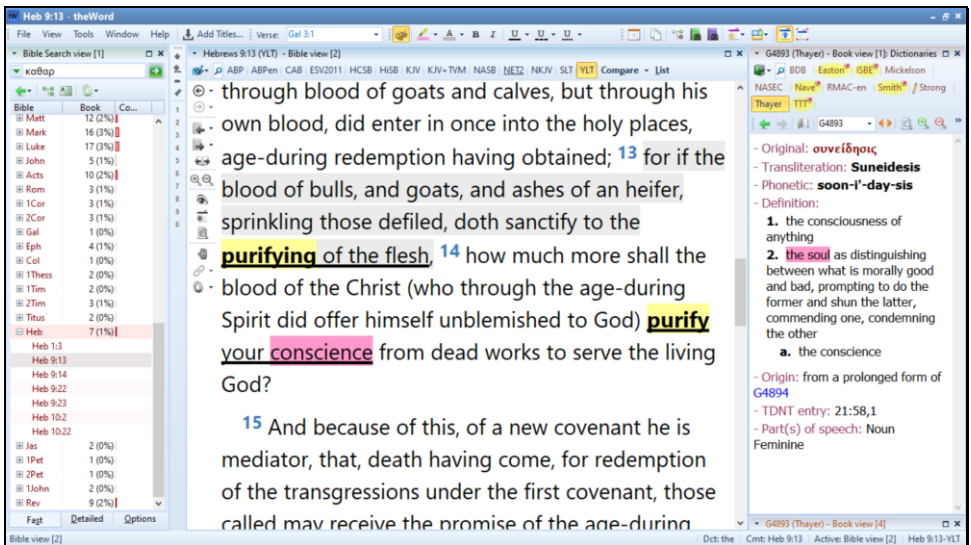
In that last passage, the main point that we *must* learn today is hidden in the original Greek. And I say this because in this passage the root word “kath-ar-id'-zo” appears twice! And, with that word, the book of Hebrews directly contrasts the most powerful cleansing ritual of the Levitical Law to the cleansing blood of JESUS our Savior!

⁶⁶ Hebrews 9:6-10

⁶⁷ Hebrews 9:11-14



Hebrews explains that the best the Levitical covenant could ever do was temporarily “**purify the flesh**”, but the HOLY SPIRIT also explains here that the blood of JESUS CHRIST can actually purify “**the consciousness**” or more literally: “**the soul**”!!



Therefore, in the New Covenant, JESUS literally purifies *the souls* of all who put their faith in Him for justification, and by His blood, we are cleansed from all the things the Law of Moses could never deal with!

Therefore, only through the grace of JESUS can we boldly approach the Holy of Holies, which represents the Heavenly Jerusalem where

GOD dwells between the literal cherubim! And *only* those who come to GOD through faith in JESUS can actually be citizens of that glorious heavenly kingdom!

Thus, Paul wrote about those who were trying to put Christians back under the Levitical law: **Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation! For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so!**⁶⁸

And then Paul described the things “*the Circumcision Party*”, a group the Apostle labeled: “dogs, evil workers, and the mutilation” would be most concerned with. He recounted how he himself was: **circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.**⁶⁹

So, if anyone could have been cleansed or justified by the Levitical Law, it would have been the Apostle Paul! But Paul went on to say: **But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith.**⁷⁰

And that brings us right back to the words of Peter, in Acts chapter 15, when He settled the controversy of whether Gentiles had to be circumcised and keep the Levitical Laws of purification by saying: **“Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore, why do you test God by**

⁶⁸ Philippians 3:2-4

⁶⁹ Philippians 3:5-6

⁷⁰ Philippians 3:7-9

putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they.”⁷¹

Brothers and Sisters, without a doubt, I can confidently proclaim to you today: JESUS and His Apostles and Disciples firmly believed and plainly taught that *certain aspects of the Levitical Law were only imposed “until the time of the reformation” inaugurated by our MESSIAH!*⁷²

And they proclaimed that: the foods, drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances of the First Covenant are *no longer necessary* to purify the people of GOD! Instead, in the New Covenant, the people of GOD are *purified by faith in JESUS CHRIST!*

But even more importantly, the Apostles of our LORD declared: if any disagreed with that fundamental fact of the Gospel, they were preaching a different gospel, and they even cursed such a person in the pages of the Holy Bible!⁷³

Therefore, today we can know for certain that the position of “Non-Abrogated Continuance” was the one the Apostles and Disciples of our LORD taught. And they vehemently disagreed with all who taught the position of: “Comprehensive Continuance”, just as they would strongly disagree with those who would teach the lawless positions of: “Repeated Continuance” or “Zero Continuance”. Only GOD has the right to repeal a law He issued, and He has never repealed any of His laws beyond those dealing with foods and drinks, various washing, and the fleshly ordinances of the Levitical Covenant!

Brothers and Sisters, the Apostles demonstrated and taught what it looked like to “**live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of GOD**”, including the heavenly command to: “**Rise, Kill, and Eat**”⁷⁴! And their inspired teachings live on in all those who follow the progressively revealed Word of GOD by holding fast to all of the Bible and the Bible alone!

⁷¹ Acts 15:7-11

⁷² Hebrews 9:10

⁷³ Galatians 1:8-9

⁷⁴ Acts 10:13-15

Chapter 3: Abrogated Ordinances

The word “holy” in the language of the Apostolic Bible is pronounced, “hag'-ee-on”. And this word means: “*set apart as pure, undefiled, sinless, or blameless*”; or: “*set apart as dedicated to GOD*”.

The screenshot shows theWord Bible software with the Greek text of Genesis 2:2-3. The text is displayed in a multi-column format with English translations in various colors. The Greek text includes: "εβδόμη", "από", "πάντων", "των έργων", "αυτού", "ων", "εποίησε", "και", "And", "ευλόγησεν ο θεός", "God blessed", "την", "the", "ημέραν", "Is", "day", "την εβδόμη", "seventh", "and", "ηγάσεν", "sanctified", "αυτήν", "it", "for", "εν", "in", "αυτή", "it", "κατέπαυσε", "he rested", "από", "from", "πάντων", "all", "των έργων", "his works", "ων", "which", "ήρξατο ο θεός", "God began", "to do", "ποιείν", "αυτή", "This", "η", "is", "the", "βιβλος", "book", "γενέσεως", "of the", "origin", "ουρανού", "of heaven", "και", "and", "γης", "earth", "ότε".

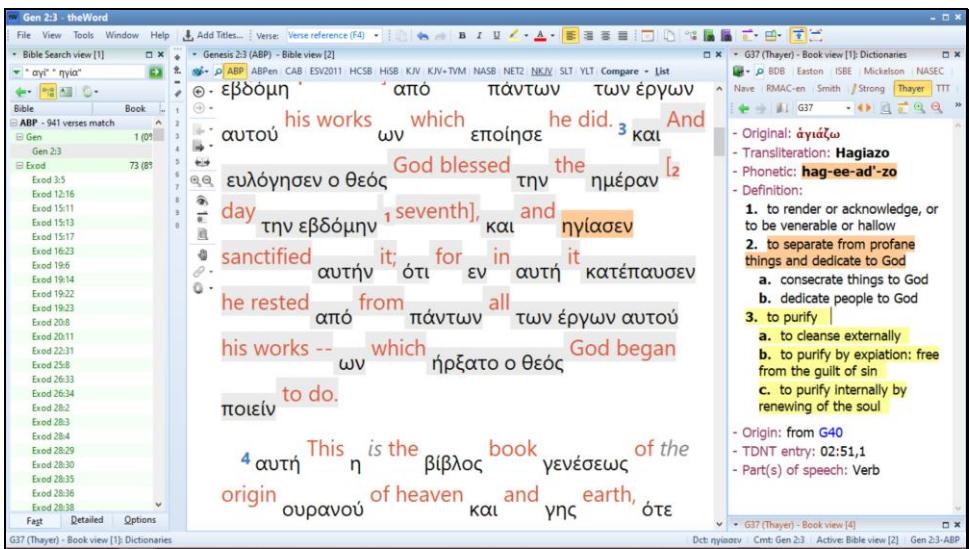
The dictionary entry for "hagiazō" is visible on the right side of the window:

- Original: ἁγιάζω
- Transliteration: Hagiazō
- Phonetic: hag-ee-ad'-zo
- Definition:
 1. to render or acknowledge, or to be venerable or hallow
 2. to separate from profane things and dedicate to God
 - a. consecrate things to God
 - b. dedicate people to God
 3. to purify
 - a. to cleanse externally
 - b. to purify by expiation: free from the guilt of sin
 - c. to purify internally by renewing of the soul
- Origin: from G40
- TDNT entry: 02:51,1
- Part(s) of speech: Verb

And the first time any form of this word is used in the Holy Bible, Scripture uses it in its *verb* form to describe *the seventh day*, by saying: **On the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.**⁷⁵

The word here translated into English as: “sanctified” is “hag-ee-ad'-zo”. So this verb, which means “to make holy”, indicates that something is being “*set apart, or separated from other things, and dedicated to GOD*”. Plus, if something was once “impure, common, or defiled” in some way, this verb indicates that something is also being “purified, cleansed, and made holy”.

⁷⁵ Genesis 2:2-3



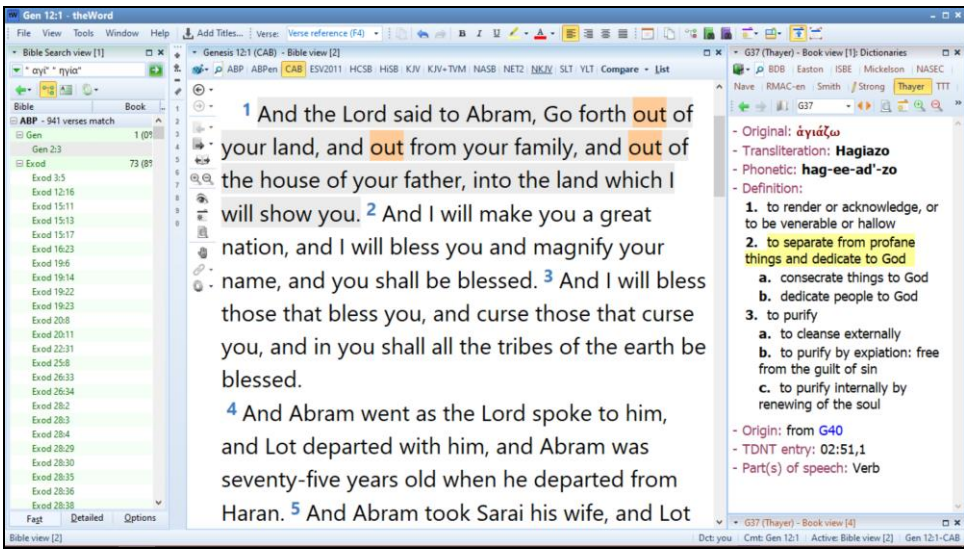
Therefore, in Genesis chapter 2 for example, GOD set the seventh day apart from the other days of the week as *dedicated* to Himself, and He demonstrated that it was *different* from the other days by resting on that day.

And, although the word “hag-ee-ad'-zo” is never used in the Bible to describe GOD’s plan for the man we eventually came to know as Abraham; it is obvious that the Creator was separating the man Scripture introduces as “Abram” from his land, his family, and his father, as uniquely dedicated to GOD.

Thus, the first thing GOD told Abram was: **“Go forth out of your land, and out from your family, and out of the house of your father, into the land which I will show you. And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you and magnify your name, and you shall be blessed. And I will bless those that bless you, and curse those that curse you, and in you shall all the tribes of the earth be blessed.”**⁷⁶

So, when Abram obeyed GOD’s commandment in faith, he became “holy” in the sense that his household was then *separated* from all that they once knew. And from that time forward, they were especially “dedicated to GOD”!

⁷⁶ Genesis 12:1-3



Then, for 24 years, Abram continued to seek after and obey GOD, as He waited in faith for GOD's promise to be fulfilled. And, while graciously overlooking a few very serious transgressions, GOD eventually said to Abram: **"I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless. And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly."**⁷⁷

But, *after* GOD gave Abram the name "Abraham", when He declared him righteous because of his faith and promised to make Him the father of many nations, He said: **"You also shall fully keep My covenant, you and your seed after you for their generations. And this is the covenant which you shall fully keep between Me and you, and between your seed after you for their generations; every male of you shall be circumcised. And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and you."**⁷⁸

Now, this was the first time in Scripture that GOD used a fleshly regulation (or ordinance) to *physically* set His people apart from the rest of the population around them, but it would not be the last. And, because circumcision was the first divinely commanded fleshly *ordinance of physical holiness*, all of the other fleshly ordinances given to the Israelites in Leviticus were considered to be closely related to circumcision.

⁷⁷ Genesis 17:1-2

⁷⁸ Genesis 17:9-11 CAB

Therefore, it is not surprising to read about the fleshly ordinance of circumcision, that GOD later told Moses: **“If any proselyte shall come to you to keep the Passover to the Lord, you shall circumcise every male of him, and then shall he approach to sacrifice it, and he shall be even as the original inhabitant of the land; no uncircumcised person shall eat of it. There shall be one law to the native, and to the proselyte coming among you.”**⁷⁹

Clearly, no uncircumcised people were ever to eat the Passover of the LORD, according to Exodus chapter 12. But *very similar restrictions* were later given for those who were Levitically unclean.

For example, it is written: **“If anyone of you or your posterity is unclean because of a corpse, or is far away on a journey, he may still keep the LORD’s Passover. On the fourteenth day of the second month, at twilight, they may keep it. They shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. They shall leave none of it until morning, nor break one of its bones. According to all the ordinances of the Passover they shall keep it.”**⁸⁰

Normally the Passover was to be eaten on the fourteenth day of the first month at twilight; but if someone was Levitically unclean, *and could not be cleansed in time for the Passover in the first month*, they could eat the Passover in the second month after they were Levitically cleansed.

So, the similarities between these passages and several others reveal why circumcision and the Levitical laws of physical purification were often associated with one another. But, second only to circumcision in terms of physical purification and fleshly holiness, were the Levitical laws regarding foods and drinks.

And this makes sense because the food and drink laws are the first laws given in the section of Leviticus that specifically deals with how the Israelites were to be *physically* holy, clean, or set apart from the nations.

When GOD presented those food laws in Leviticus, He said: **“Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, These are the beasts which you shall**

⁷⁹ Exodus 12:48-49 CAB

⁸⁰ Numbers 9:10-12 CAB

eat out of all beasts that are upon the earth. Every beast parting the hoof and making divisions of two claws, and chewing the cud among beasts, these you shall eat.”⁸¹

And then GOD explained: **“But of these you shall not eat of those that chew the cud, and of those that part the hoofs, and divide claws: the camel, because it chews the cud, but does not divide the hoof, this is unclean to you. And the rabbit, because it chews the cud, but does not divide the hoof, this is unclean to you. And the hare, because it does not chew the cud, and does not divide the hoof, this is unclean to you. And the swine, because this animal divides the hoof, and makes claws of the hoof, and it does not chew the cud, is unclean to you. You shall not eat of their flesh, and you shall not touch their carcasses; these are unclean to you.”⁸²**

In that short passage, GOD repeated one particular phrase 5 times; and that phrase was: “unclean to you”. So, we must not miss the prepositional phrase: “to you” that GOD included all through this passage so frequently. In fact, we must notice this *same short prepositional phrase is used 18 times* in Leviticus chapter 11 in the Bible of the Apostles!

For example, GOD also said: **“These are what you shall eat of all that are in the waters: all things that have fins and scales in the waters, and in the seas, and in the brooks, these you shall eat. And all things which have not fins or scales in the water, or in the seas, and in the brooks, of all which the waters produce, and of every soul living in the water, are an abomination; and they shall be abominations to you. You shall not eat of their flesh, and you shall abhor their carcasses. And all things that have not fins or scales of those that are in the waters, these are an abomination to you.”⁸³**

So, land animals that both chew the cud and have cloven hoofs, along with marine creatures with fins and scales were all approved as food for the Israelites in Leviticus 11. But land animals that did not both chew the cud *and* have cloven hooves were *unclean to the children of*

⁸¹ Leviticus 11:2-3 CAB

⁸² Leviticus 11:4-8 CAB

⁸³ Leviticus 11:9-12 CAB

Israel, just as all aquatic life that did not have *both* fins and scales was to be an *abomination to them*.

Likewise, GOD said: **“And these are unclean to you of reptiles upon the earth: the weasel, the mouse, the lizard, the ferret, the chameleon, the evet, the newt, and the mole. These are unclean to you of all the reptiles which are on the earth; everyone who touches their carcasses shall be unclean till evening.”**⁸⁴

Plus, GOD also explained: **“Every animal that creeps on its belly, and everyone that goes on four feet continually, which abounds with feet among all the reptiles creeping upon the earth you shall not eat it, for it is an abomination to you.”**⁸⁵

Meanwhile, in order to see why the prepositional phrase: “to you” is important, we should also note that Scripture records: **Now his heart yearned for his brother; so Joseph made haste and sought somewhere to weep. And he went into his chamber and wept there. Then he washed his face and came out; and he restrained himself, and said, “Serve the bread.” So they set him a place by himself, and them by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves; because the Egyptians could not eat food with the Hebrews, for that is an abomination to the Egyptians.**⁸⁶

So, it was fairly common in the ancient world for various cultures to consider certain eating practices “abominations”. But while we note that historical fact, we should also state that the animals GOD listed as “clean” in Leviticus chapter 11 are generally higher on the food chain than their “unclean” counterparts. So, if this was simply a diet recommendation from GOD it might make logical sense to any dietitians who studied it. But we must remember Noah was not given these dietary restrictions, and ordinary dietary restrictions cannot make a person “unclean”.

Yes, we must remember how, just after listing what was clean and unclean among the flying creatures and the insects, and just before listing what was clean and unclean among the smaller animals, GOD went on to say: **“By these you shall be defiled; everyone that touches their carcasses shall be unclean till the evening. And**

⁸⁴ Leviticus 11:29-31 CAB

⁸⁵ Leviticus 11:42 CAB

⁸⁶ Genesis 43:30-32

everyone that takes of their dead bodies shall wash his garments, and shall be unclean till the evening.”⁸⁷

Obviously, because GOD said everyone that “touches” or “takes of” an “unclean” carcass is “defiled” or “unclean until evening”, because ritual washings were required when physical contact with an “unclean” carcass was made, and because GOD later tied these particular ordinances to physical “holiness”, these food regulations went far beyond dietary recommendations, and they took on a religious significance to the children of Israel.

Meanwhile, The LORD made it very clear: if a person “touched” or “took of” any Levitically “unclean” carcass, all they had to do was *wash their clothes and wait until evening*. Therefore, no serious penalty ever existed for those who were made “unclean” by these foods.

But in stark contrast to the washing and waiting associated with unclean foods, the penalty for not being circumcised was given when GOD said to Abraham: **“And the uncircumcised male, who shall not be circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin on the eighth day, that soul shall be utterly destroyed from his family, for he has broken My covenant.”⁸⁸**

The screenshot shows a Bible software window titled "Gen 17:14 - theWord". The main text area displays the following passage: "every male throughout your generations, and the servant born in the house and he that is bought with money, of every son of a stranger, who is not of your seed. ¹³ He that is born in your house, and he that is bought with money shall surely be circumcised, and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. ¹⁴ And the uncircumcised male, who shall not be circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin on the eighth day, that soul shall be utterly destroyed from his family, for he has broken My covenant. ¹⁵ And God said to Abraham, Sarai, your wife her name shall not be called Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. ¹⁶ And I will bless her, and give you a son by her, and I will bless him, and he shall become nations." The text is in the King James Version (KJV). A dictionary window is open on the right, showing the entry for the Greek word "Exolothreuo". The dictionary entry includes: Original: ἐξολοθρεύω, Transliteration: Exolothreuo, Phonetic: ex-ol-oth-ryoo'-o, Definition: 1. to destroy out of its place, destroy utterly, to extirpate, Origin: from G1537 and G3645, TDNT entry: 07:50,7, and Part(s) of speech: Verb.

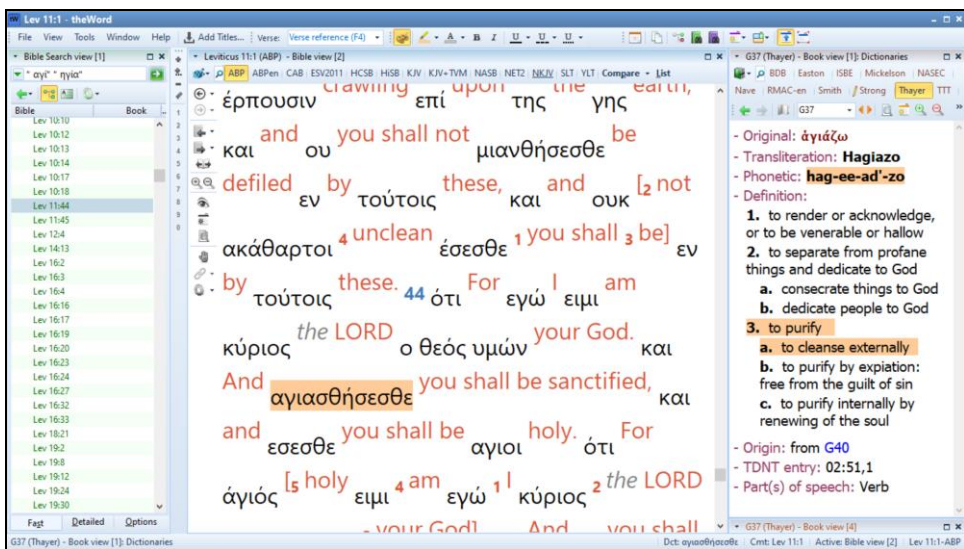
⁸⁷ Leviticus 11:24-25 CAB

⁸⁸ Genesis 17:14 CAB

So, in the Bible the Apostles trusted, circumcision was clearly much more important to GOD, compared to the food laws of Leviticus 11, since the penalty was so much greater! Meanwhile, no reasonable person can debate the fact that circumcision was clearly abrogated in the New Covenant when they honestly read all the Apostles wrote about that issue.

And now we should also note: in this final food Levitical passage, we see what these Levitical ordinances regarding foods were meant to accomplish; and Bible expresses that goal with the words: **“you shall be sanctified”**, and **“you shall be holy”**.⁸⁹

Yes, in the Ancient Septuagint, the key word used in that passage is, of course: “hag-ee-ad'-zo”. And, because that Greek word means: “to make or to be holy”, after commanding them to “make themselves holy”, GOD adds “you shall be holy; for I am holy”. So, based on all that is written about these specific laws, we can call them part of *the ordinances of physical holiness* in Leviticus.



And we should also mention that the drinks of the Israelites were affected by these ordinances, because GOD also said: **“Every earthen vessel into which one of these things shall fall, whatsoever is inside it shall be unclean, and it shall be broken. And all food that is eaten, on which water shall come from such**

⁸⁹ Leviticus 11:44-45 CAB

a vessel, shall be unclean; and every beverage which is drunk in any such vessel shall be unclean.”⁹⁰

Similarly, GOD also said: **“Only if the water be of fountains of water, or a pool, or confluence of water, it shall be clean; but he that touches their carcasses shall be unclean.”⁹¹**

So, just within Leviticus chapter 11, GOD listed certain physical ordinances governing the *foods and drinks* of the Israelites, along with certain *ritual washings* they had to employ, to be cleansed if they came in contact with an unclean food. And these **“foods, drinks, and various washings”⁹²** were part of how they were to maintain their physical purity and holiness in the Levitical Covenant.

But, another component of these dietary *ordinances of physical holiness* was expanded on when Scripture records: **“You shall eat nothing that dies of itself; it shall be given to the sojourner in your cities and he shall eat it, or you shall sell it to a stranger, because you are a holy people unto the Lord your God.”⁹³**

So, the food laws of the Levitical system were part of how an Israelite physically “sanctified themselves” or “made themselves physically holy and set apart from the other nations”. But certain specific foods that GOD had commanded them not to eat, the sojourner and the stranger were permitted to consume.

And with this flexibility understood, we see when we read on in Leviticus chapter 12 that the *Levitical ordinances of physical holiness* involved more than just foods and drinks! Because, next GOD told the Israelites exactly how many days a woman was to be considered physically “unclean” after having a male child or a female child. And then He explained what sacrifices they must offer, to purify themselves after their “days of impurity”.⁹⁴

Then in Chapter 13 of Leviticus, GOD continued to explain the Levitical ordinances of physical holiness when He gave instructions on skin diseases like leprosy. For example, GOD instructed: **“The**

⁹⁰ Leviticus 11:33-34 CAB

⁹¹ Leviticus 11:36 CAB

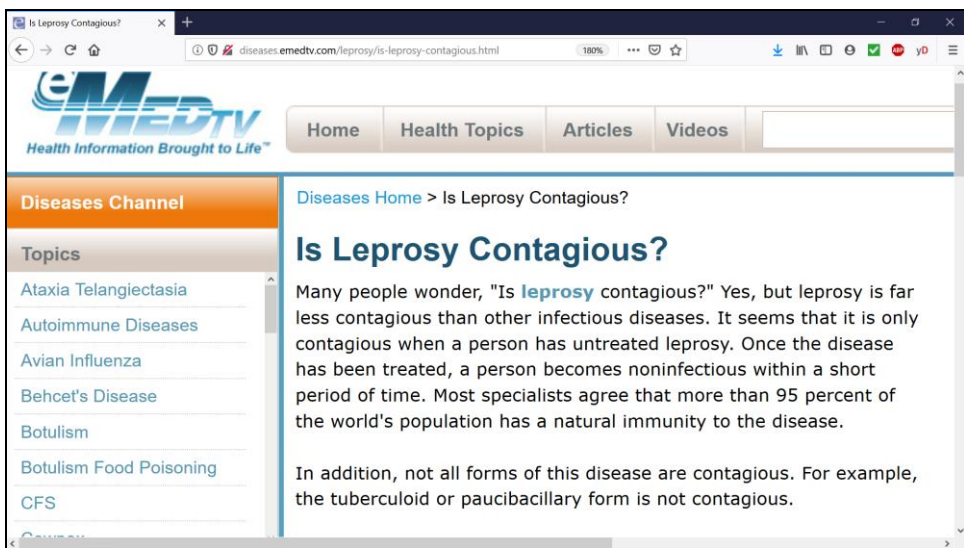
⁹² Hebrews 9:10

⁹³ Deuteronomy 14:21 CAB

⁹⁴ Leviticus 12:1-8

leper in whom the plague is, let his garments be torn, and his head uncovered; and let him have a covering put upon his mouth, and he shall be called unclean. All the days in which the plague shall be upon him, being unclean, he shall be esteemed unclean; he shall dwell apart, his place of sojourn shall be outside the camp.”⁹⁵

Meanwhile, about leprosy, E Med TV.com writes: “Many people wonder, ‘Is leprosy contagious?’ Yes, but leprosy is far less contagious than other infectious diseases. It seems that it is only contagious when a person has untreated leprosy. Once the disease has been treated, a person becomes noninfectious within a short period of time. Most specialists agree that more than 95 percent of the world's population has a natural immunity to the disease.” But if Leprosy is “far less contagious than other infectious diseases”, why did GOD command that all lepers be put out of the camp?



Well, later GOD instructed: “Command the children of Israel that they put out of the camp every leper, everyone who has a discharge, and whoever becomes defiled by a corpse. “You shall put out both male and female; you shall put them outside the camp, that they may not defile their camps in the midst of which I dwell.”⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Leviticus 13:45-46 CAB

⁹⁶ Numbers 5:2-3

You see, this verse explains the real reason behind the clean and unclean ordinances of Leviticus! GOD “tabernacled” or “dwelled” in the midst of the camp, and, in the First Covenant, His holiness and His proximity demanded that they be *physically* pure and holy!

In fact, the Levitical ordinances of physical purity were given *just after* Nadab and Abihu died in the Tabernacle of the LORD in Leviticus chapter 10 because they burned “strange” or *unauthorized* incense in GOD’s presence. And when they died, GOD warned: **“By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; and before all the people I must be glorified.”**⁹⁷

And that is why, after the Levitical ordinances of physical holiness were given in chapters 11 through 15 of Leviticus, in chapter 15, GOD wrapped all of those regulations up by saying: **“Thus you shall separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness, lest they die in their uncleanness when they defile My tabernacle that is among them.”**⁹⁸

If you read carefully, it is obvious that Leviticus 10-16 all were given to Moses at the same time Nadab and Abihu died because they are mentioned at the beginning and end of that portion of the Bible. Therefore, this passage in Leviticus 15 (combined with the death of Nadab and Abihu in Leviticus chapter 10) plainly explains why GOD issued all of the clean and unclean rules of the book of Leviticus; rules that can literally be described as **“foods, drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances”!**⁹⁹

You see, GOD’s holy *tabernacle* was in their camp. And later, His holy *temple* was located within their nation. But they did not yet have the blood of JESUS to be truly cleansed. So, when *the Levitical priesthood* was all they had to purify or consecrate themselves, they had to follow certain rules of physical holiness that were (very literally): **“concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation”**¹⁰⁰.

And those Levitical “foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation” were sandwiched

⁹⁷ Leviticus 10:3

⁹⁸ Leviticus 15:31

⁹⁹ Hebrews 9:10

¹⁰⁰ Hebrews 9:10

between references to the death of Nadab and Abihu in *Leviticus Chapter 10* and the ordinances of the Day of Atonement in *Leviticus chapter 16*, where GOD instructed the High Priest that he could only enter the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle once a year when he cleansed the Tabernacle of the *uncleanness* of the children of Israel.¹⁰¹

But at “the time of reformation”, when JESUS introduced a new Priesthood according to the order of Melchizedek, a priesthood founded on His own precious blood, JESUS Himself abrogated the Levitical “foods, drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances” of the First Covenant!

After all, Hebrews explains: **“For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law.”**¹⁰²

And those physical “fleshly ordinances” that dealt with various forms of physical purity and holiness were *only* imposed within the Levitical Covenant because the power to *truly* cleanse the people and make them holy was not yet revealed until the New Covenant Priesthood came!

Thus, when our Eternal, Heavenly, Ultimate High Priest came, He did what the Levitical priests could never do! You see, He did not just inspect the lepers to declare if they were clean or unclean! Instead, He completely cleansed the Lepers¹⁰³ from the inside out, and reconnected them to the people of GOD! And that is why the Bible always uses the verb “cleansed” when it describes how JESUS helped people with Leprosy!

And, in the same way that JESUS physically *cleansed* those lepers, He spiritually purifies the hearts of all those who repent and put their faith in Him. And that is why Peter said: **“God, who knows the heart, acknowledged the Gentiles by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.”**¹⁰⁴

Truly, because Peter witnessed those Gentiles receiving the HOLY SPIRIT even while they were not observing the ritual purification

¹⁰¹ Leviticus 16:16

¹⁰² Hebrews 7:12

¹⁰³ Matthew 8:2-3

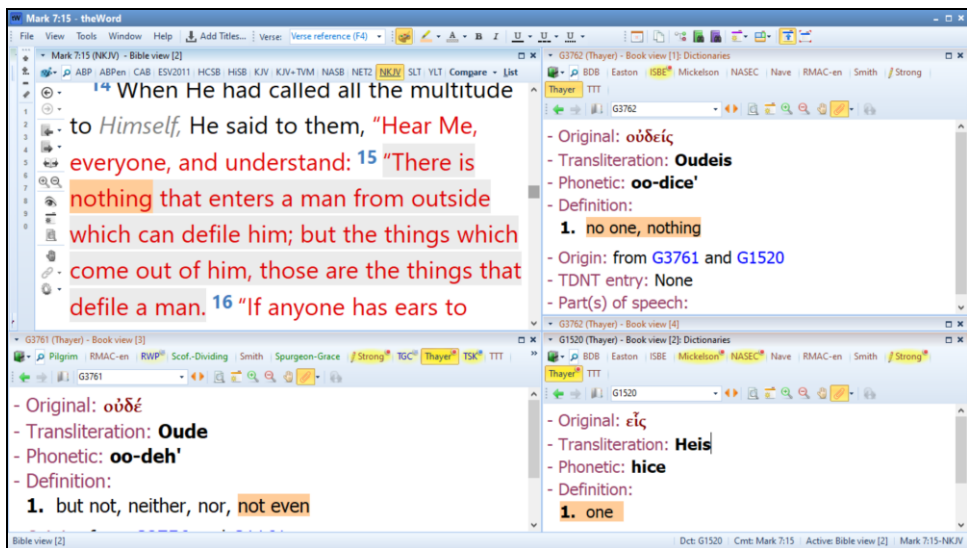
¹⁰⁴ Acts 15:8-9

ordinances of the book of Leviticus, he knew a “time of reformation” had come; and true purification and lasting holiness now came through faith in JESUS CHRIST, in the New Covenant!

But, *even before Peter understood that fundamental truth of the Gospel*, and even before He heard GOD clearly abrogate the food laws in Acts chapter 10, he would have certainly been present when JESUS taught about foods, by saying: **“Hear Me, everyone, and understand: There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man. If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!”**¹⁰⁵

Now, some teachers will claim that all of Mark chapter 7 up to verse 23 is strictly discussing “eating with unwashed hands”, but that is an unsupportable position. And we can confidently say this because of the language JESUS used in this chapter.

For example, when JESUS said **“there is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him”**, the Greek word he used, that we translate as “nothing”, is “oo-dice’”. And this Greek word literally means “not one thing”.

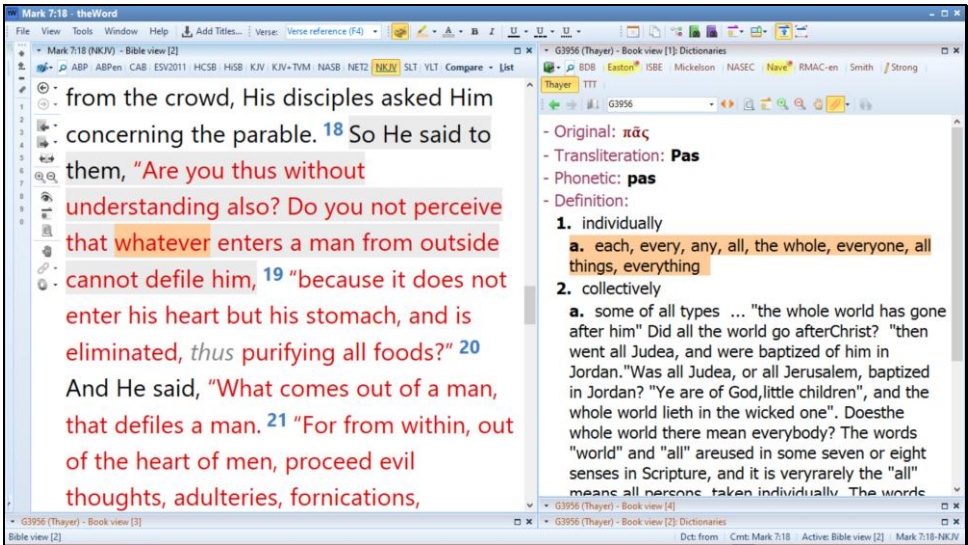


And later, Mark recorded: **When He had entered a house away from the crowd, His disciples asked Him concerning the parable. So**

¹⁰⁵ Mark 7:14-16

He said to them, “Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him, because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, thus purifying all foods?”¹⁰⁶

Now, the word translated here as “whatever” is the all-inclusive Greek word “pas”, which means: “all things” or “everything”.



So, when we combine the all-inclusive language JESUS is using with the clear description of foods passing through the digestive tract, and add in the LORD’s closing statement, it is undeniable that JESUS is speaking about “all foods”.

¹⁰⁶ Mark 7:17-19

“Comprehensive Continuance” have falsely claimed that these Greek words do not appear in any ancient Greek manuscripts.

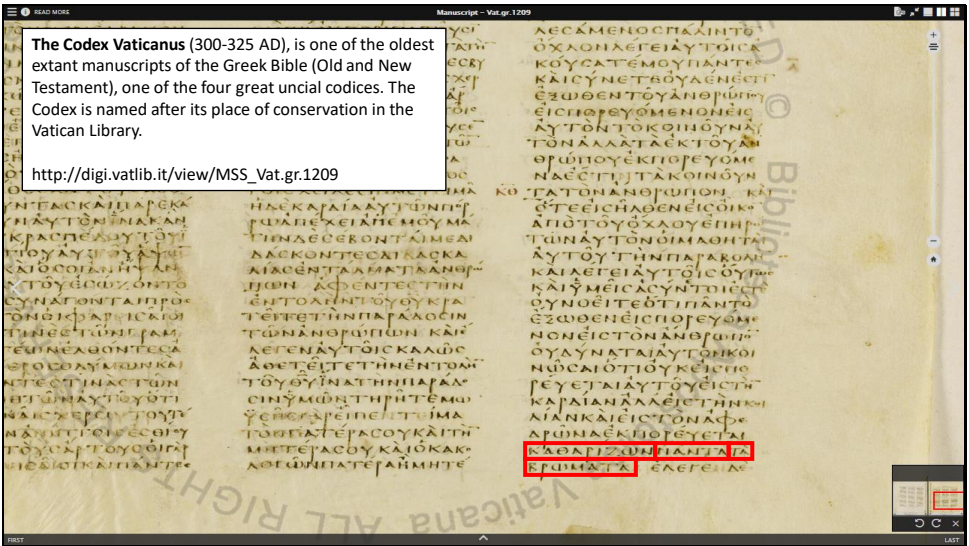
For example, one particular online teacher wrongly states about those four Greek words of JESUS: “If you look in the Latin Vulgate, which is the basis for all the modern Bibles today, you won’t find this text at all!” It’s been inserted into the text in the last hundred years by somebody!” “And all these Bibles now are saying it, most of the modern ones are.” “So, who put it there? Well, I found out the answer; it was Nestle, well, two guys named Nestle and Aland. They came out with an edition of the New Testament from the Greek, uh, back in 1926 - I believe it was the 13th edition, 1927 that was finally copyrighted - it was, I believe, from what I have found from my research, that’s the first time ever you will see in parentheses in your Bible, in verse 19 of Mark chapter 7, “In saying this, Jesus declared all foods clean”. “If you look at the original Greek manuscripts, the Latin Vulgate, the Sinaiticus, the Vaticanus, all of these - the Alexandrian manuscripts, the Wescott and Hort, all of these, this is not there. That verse isn’t there! Just not there!”

“If you look in the Latin Vulgate, which is the basis for all the modern Bibles today [incorrect], you won’t find this text at all!” It’s been inserted into the text in the last hundred years by somebody!” “And all these Bibles now are saying it, most of the modern ones are.” “So, who put it there? Well, I found out the answer; it was Nestle, well, two guys named Nestle and Aland. They came out with an edition of the New Testament from the Greek, uh, back in 1926 - I believe it was the 13th edition, 1927 that was finally copyrighted - it was, I believe, from what I have found from my research, that’s the first time ever you will see in parentheses in your Bible, in verse 19 of Mark chapter 7, “In saying this, Jesus declared all foods clean”. “If you look at the original Greek manuscripts, the Latin Vulgate [not a Greek manuscript], the Sinaiticus, the Vaticanus, all of these - the Alexandrian manuscripts, the Wescott and Hort, all of these, this is not there. That verse isn’t there! Just not there!”

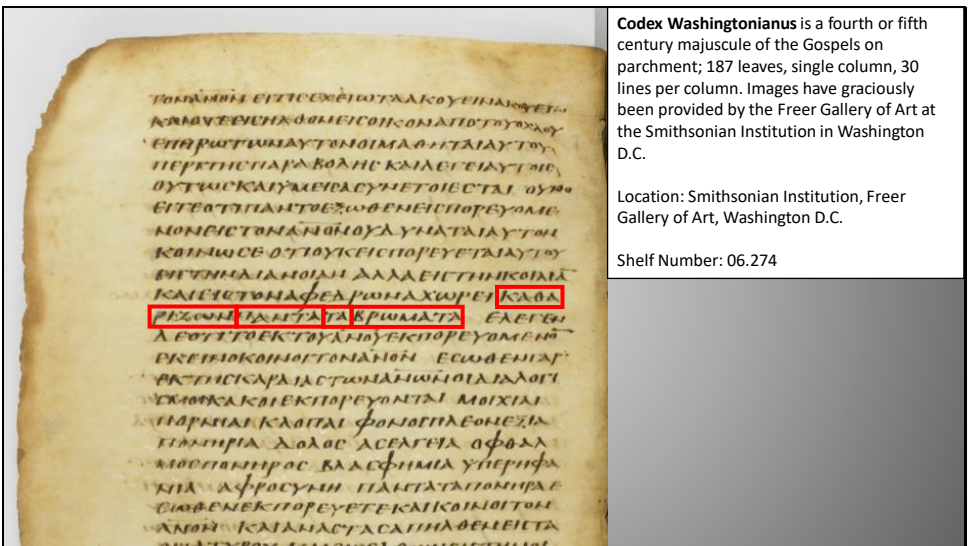
February 26, 2015 - Zachary Bauer - “I’m Not Giving Up My Bacon!” - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=408lGJtMtRM> - (Starting at 2:32 - Begins a discussion of Mark 7:19)

Now, for this very inaccurate statement to actually be true: the four Greek words: “kath-ar-id'-zon pan'-ta ta bro'-mah-ta” must not be represented in the Latin Vulgate (which is not the basis for all the modern Bible translations, by the way). Also, those four Greek words must not be represented in the Codex Sinaiticus, the Codex Vaticanus, any Alexandrian manuscripts, or the text compiled by Wescott and Hort, *if this wild claim were to be considered true*.

Here we see the four supposedly missing words “kath-ar-id'-zon pan'-ta ta bro'-mah-ta” all clearly represented in the Codex Vaticanus, that we were specifically told did not contain “this text” or “that verse”.

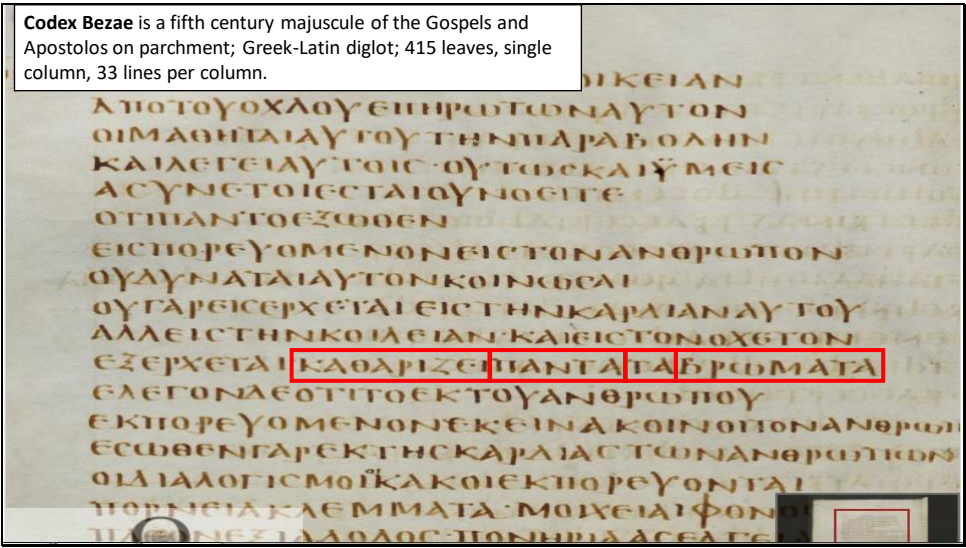


Here we see the four supposedly missing words all clearly represented in the Codex Washingtonianus.



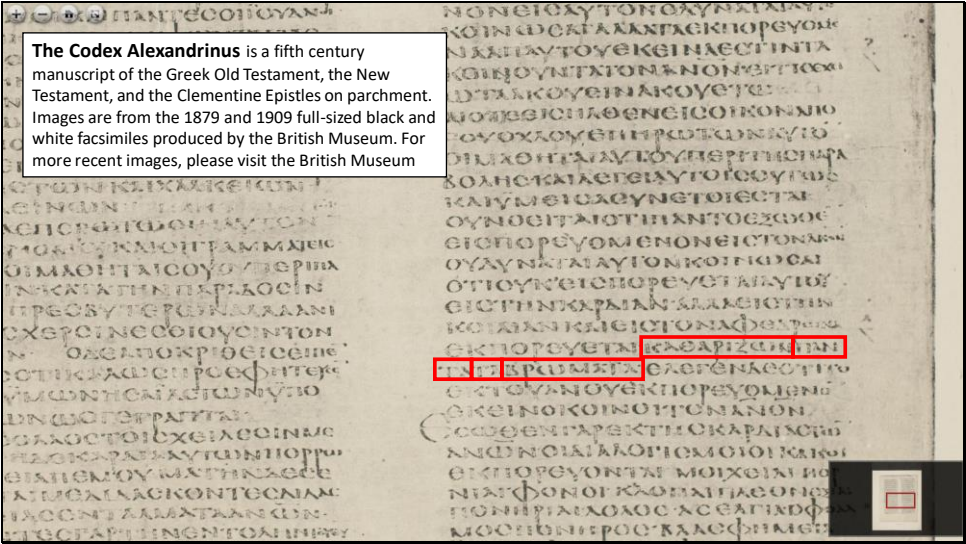
Here we see the four supposedly missing words all clearly represented in the Codex Bezae.

Codex Bezae is a fifth century majuscule of the Gospels and Apostolos on parchment; Greek-Latin diglot; 415 leaves, single column, 33 lines per column.

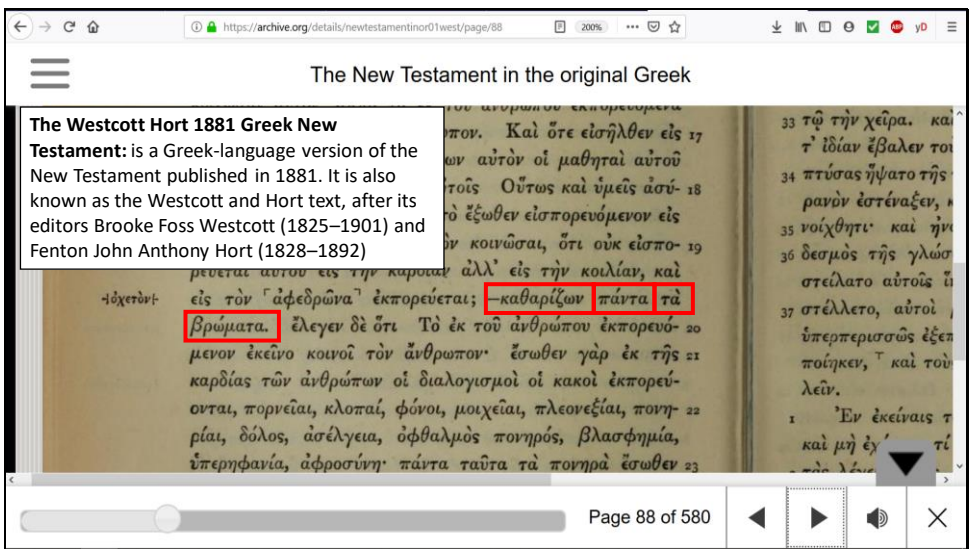


Here we see the four supposedly missing words all clearly represented in the Codex Alexandrinus.

The Codex Alexandrinus is a fifth century manuscript of the Greek Old Testament, the New Testament, and the Clementine Epistles on parchment. Images are from the 1879 and 1909 full-sized black and white facsimiles produced by the British Museum. For more recent images, please visit the British Museum



And, here we see the four supposedly missing words that mean “cleansing all the foods” all clearly represented in the Wescott and Hort 1881 Greek New Testament, which we were specifically told did not contain “this text” or “that verse”.

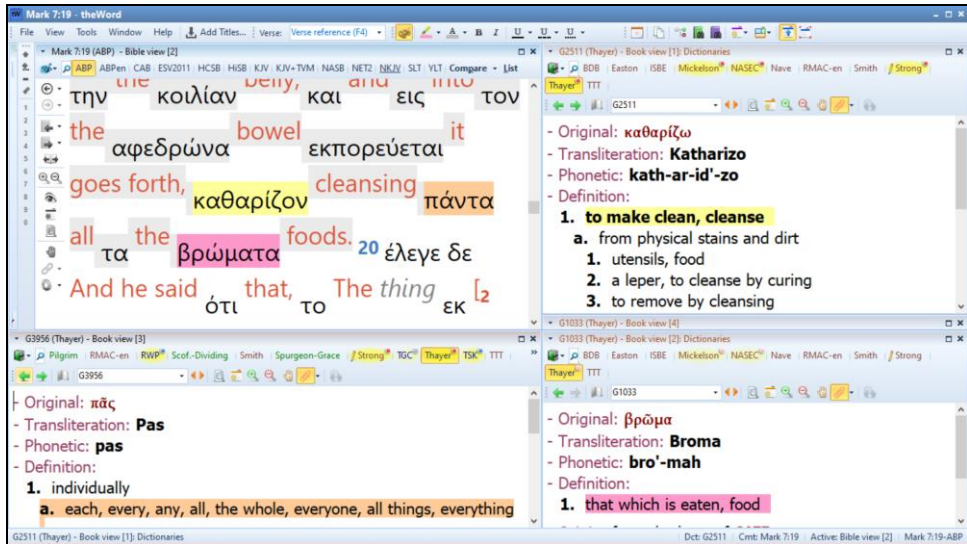


So, all of the places this greatly mistaken internet teacher confidently named as not containing the Latin or Greek equivalent of “purifying all the foods” actually contain those words. In fact, you cannot find a single ancient manuscript of Chapter 7 of Mark’s gospel that is missing those words! Therefore, those words are not considered to be a textual variant by reputable scholars, in any way!

But, over the years we have met many deceived people who still try to defend this dangerous false claim by suggesting that this online teacher was only saying “*those English words don’t appear in those texts*”. Meanwhile, the fact is: unless he is profoundly ignorant, there is no possible way he could have been claiming that “the English words of some particular translation” did not appear in the Latin or Greek texts he listed, because (by definition) none of those texts contain any English at all! Every manuscript, translation, and compilation he mentioned are exclusively Greek or Latin texts, but they all contain Latin or Greek words that indicate the emptying of the digestive system “cleanses all of the foods”.

It is universally understood by legitimate scholars that those ancient documents and the Greek New Testament Editions he named are all written in Latin or Greek! And it is clear that he said: “That verse isn’t there” when referring to several ancient Greek manuscripts, and “It’s been inserted into the text in the last hundred years by somebody” when referring to the Latin Vulgate!

So, the claim most certainly can be summarized as: “the Latin and Greek Texts do not contain words that could be translated as: ‘purifying all the foods’”. But this was either a lie or an egregious error! And, either way, it was a full-frontal attack on the Word of GOD, and a pitiful attempt to try to overthrow the eternally preserved words of JESUS our King!



Contrary to his false claims, there can be no doubting or debating that JESUS actually said the equivalent of: “purifying all the foods”. And with the fact that JESUS was actually teaching about “all the foods” and not just “eating with unwashed hands” firmly and irrefutably established, we can look at the passage in context to see what JESUS was explaining.

First, JESUS said: “**Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him, because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, thus purifying all foods?**”¹⁰⁷

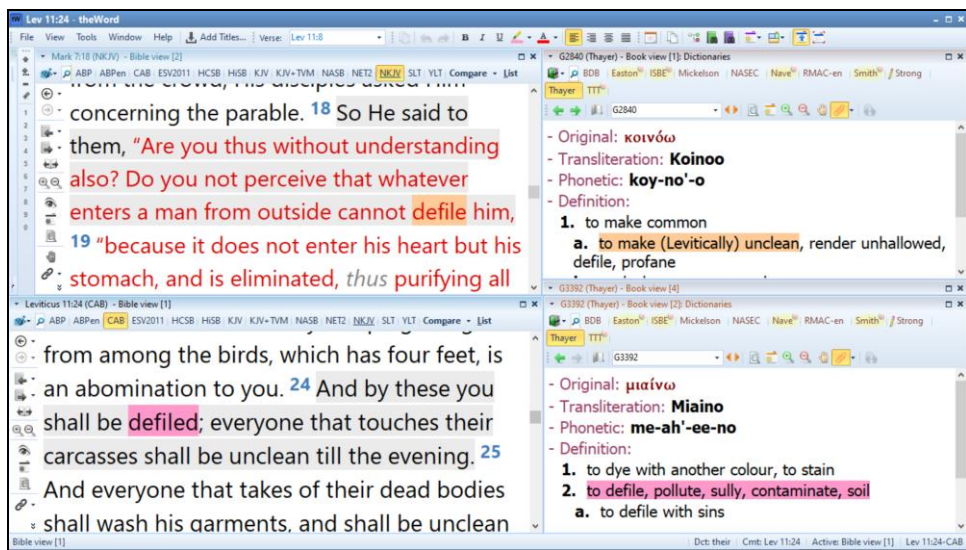
Then He added: “**What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a**

¹⁰⁷ Mark 7:18-19

man.”¹⁰⁸ And the challenge of these words of JESUS is: they seem to directly contradict what He said to Moses in Leviticus chapter 11.

These passages *seem* to contradict each other, because in Leviticus, the LORD said to Moses: **“Every creeping thing from among the birds, which has four feet, is an abomination to you. And by these you shall be defiled; everyone that touches their carcasses shall be unclean till the evening. And everyone that takes of their dead bodies shall wash his garments, and shall be unclean till the evening.”**¹⁰⁹

Technically JESUS used a different Greek word than the Septuagint uses in Leviticus 11, but both words that are translated as “defile” mean: “to make (Leviticallly) unclean”. So, the answer to this Biblical puzzle is not found in those two words that truly mean the same thing.

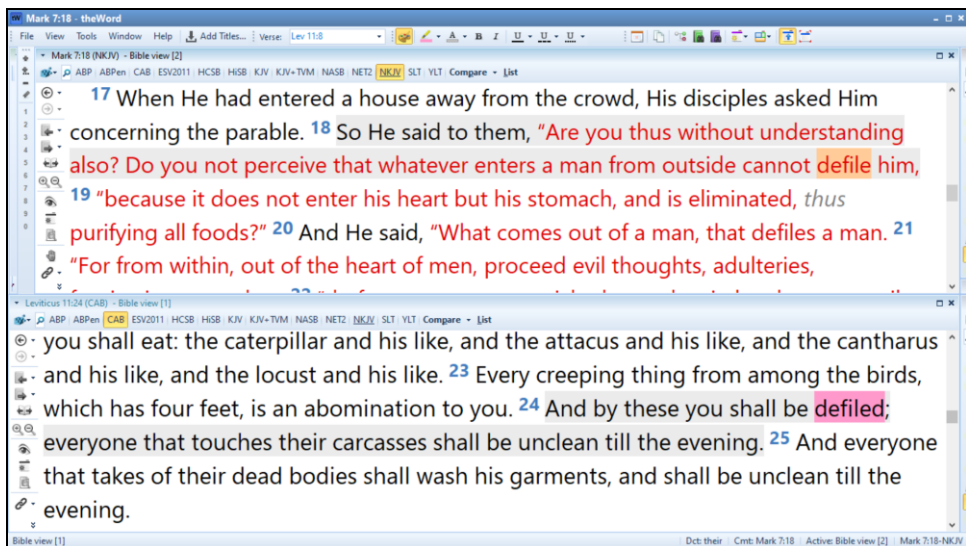


No, the answer is found *in the context* in which those two words were used! Because the context of Leviticus chapter 11 is physical defilement, and the context of Mark chapter 7 is spiritual defilement.

Therefore, JESUS plainly taught that foods cannot spiritually defile a person because they pass through the digestive tract, and are eliminated. And by the evening, the person is physically cleansed from whatever they ate!

¹⁰⁸ Mark 7:20-23

¹⁰⁹ Leviticus 11:23-25 CAB



But the evil things that come out of a person from the heart can spiritually defile them, and make them spiritually unclean. And *spiritual* defilement is far worse in the LORD's eyes than *physical* defilement! But, this deeper concern for *spiritual* things over *physical* things is very common when we compare the New Covenant to the First Covenant!

For example, in the First Covenant, GOD was concerned with *physical* circumcision, but in the New Covenant, it is written: **In Christ you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.**¹¹⁰

And Paul explains: **For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.**¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ Colossians 2:11-12

¹¹¹ Romans 2:28-29



For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. Hebrews 10:1

So, when we realize that *there really are two different covenants in the Bible, an Old Covenant and a New Covenant*, we can see that some of the physical aspects of the First Covenant were “shadows”¹¹² that were given to us to teach us about the deeper spiritual things of the New Covenant! But other aspects were given as temporary means of sanctification, that could not even make the high priest clean enough to enter the holy of holies.

So, JESUS came to provide true holiness that no longer relies on foods and drinks, various washings, or fleshly ordinances! And by abolishing those fleshly ordinances¹¹³, He united both His circumcised and uncircumcised Disciples into one congregation.

Thus, the Book of Hebrews explains very specifically that the foods, drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances of the First Covenant were only imposed until the time of reformation¹¹⁴ when the New Covenant was established in the blood of JESUS CHRIST our Savior!

Therefore, we will discover through many different Apostolic passages the fact that the food laws of Leviticus 11 are abrogated ordinances of the First Covenant. And this was incontrovertibly established in Acts

¹¹² Hebrews 10:1

¹¹³ Ephesians 2:14-15

¹¹⁴ Hebrews 9:10

chapter 10, when Peter heard the LORD's voice from heaven tell him to "rise, kill, and eat!"¹¹⁵

Consequently, in the New Covenant we are taught: **Every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.**¹¹⁶ And this is the plain message of GOD's progressively revealed Word, when we let every verse speak as it was written within all of the Bible and the Bible alone!

¹¹⁵ Acts 10:11-16

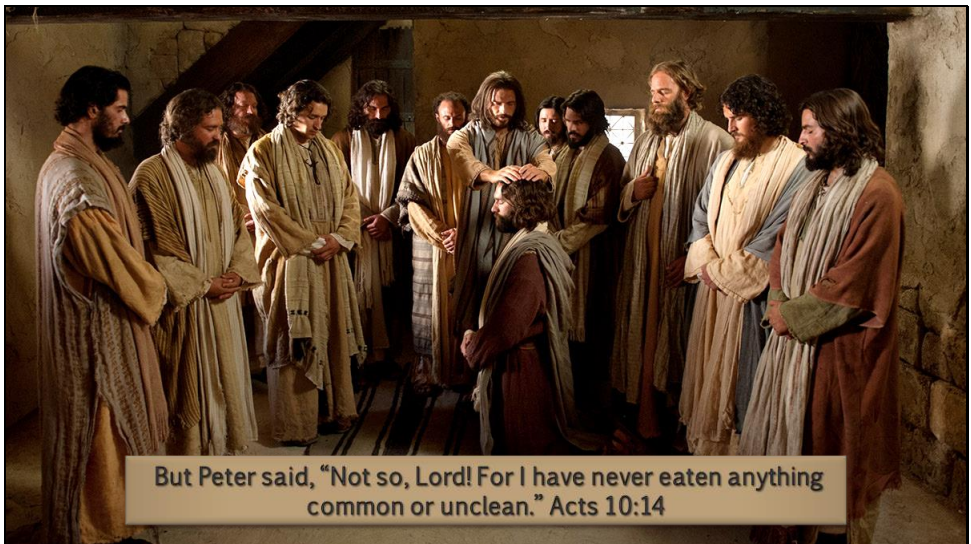
¹¹⁶ 1 Timothy 4:4-5

Chapter 4: The Reformation Declaration

Today, we implore you to imagine for just a moment that GOD asked you to do something for Him. Please imagine that GOD asked you to announce to the world that He was formally ending the food restrictions laid out in the 11th Chapter of Leviticus. If GOD asked you to tell the world such news, how would you announce that hypothetical message in the most effective way possible?

Simply ask yourselves: what would be the most effective way to deliver a message that communicated: *“Every animal GOD created was now to be considered ‘clean’ and approved for food”*? Would you hire a skywriter? Would you announce it on Twitter? But most importantly, how would people know they could trust such an announcement?

The fact is, in order for the proclamation to be trusted, an Apostle would have to be part of the announcement! But the Apostles had always faithfully observed the Leviticus 11 ordinances regarding “clean” and “unclean” animals their entire lives. So, GOD would have to tell an Apostle the message directly, in a very clear and completely unmistakable way for them to hear and obey it.

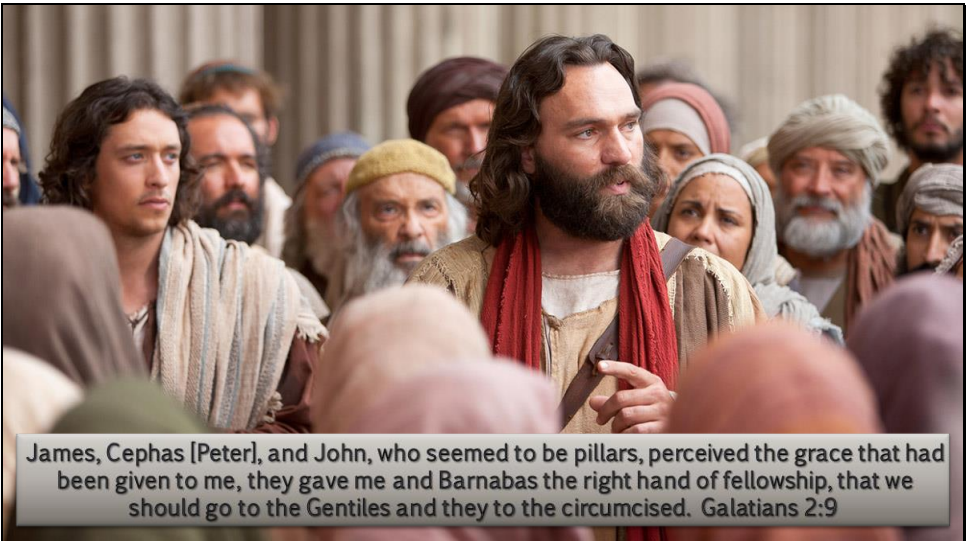


Yes, GOD would have to directly speak to one of His Apostles, and because of the importance they placed on the restrictions of Leviticus 11, GOD might need to draw them a picture, to very plainly show them what He wanted them to understand so that there would be no

confusion! Then, along with that picture, GOD would have to speak some very clear, very unmistakable commands; commands that could only be applied to the image He was showing to the Apostle.



But because the announcement was such an important one, to guarantee that people would trust the message, GOD would have to make sure that He showed the undeniable image to one of His Apostles that everyone would listen to and respect. Someone like, *for example*, the Apostle Peter, who Paul compared to “**a pillar**” in the Jerusalem church.



James, Cephas [Peter], and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. Galatians 2:9

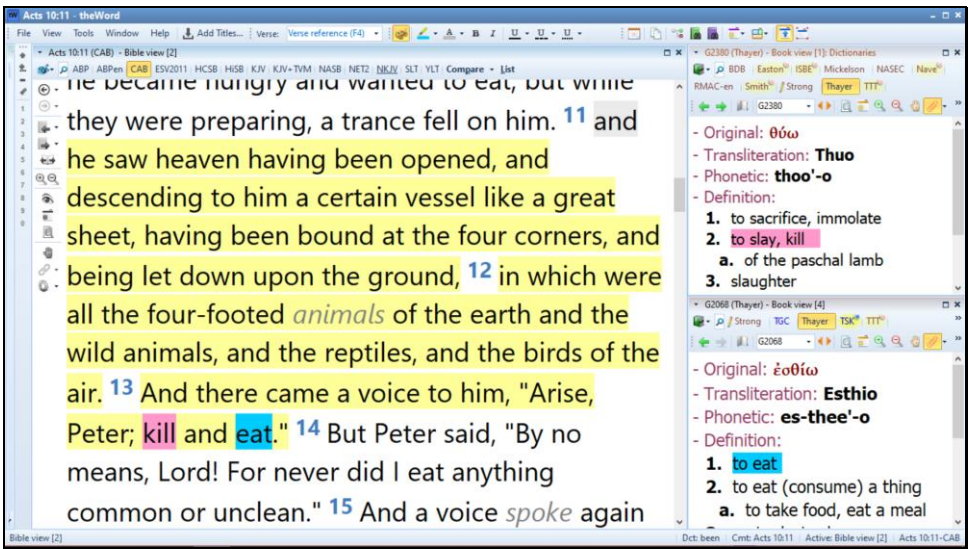
So, if we assume for a moment that you were trying to imagine how the LORD might possibly tell His Apostles that He was abrogating the food laws of Leviticus 11, I don't think anyone could possibly conclude that there was a more effective way to convey that message than what Luke describes in Acts chapter 10.



Therefore, as we begin today, please understand: showing the Apostle Peter a vision of a great sheet containing “**all of the creatures of the earth, with the wild beasts, the creeping things, and the winged creatures of the sky**”; and telling Peter to “**get up, kill, and eat**”¹¹⁷ those animals would be about the most effective way ever to announce the Leviticus 11 food laws were no longer in effect!

And one reason that this method of communication would be the most effective is, the commands “**kill**” and “**eat**” only make sense if the message you were trying to convey was about **the animals** Peter was shown in the sheet. Truly, only animals can be both “**killed**” and “**eaten**”, and those two commands cannot be applied to any other created thing beyond those animals Peter was shown.

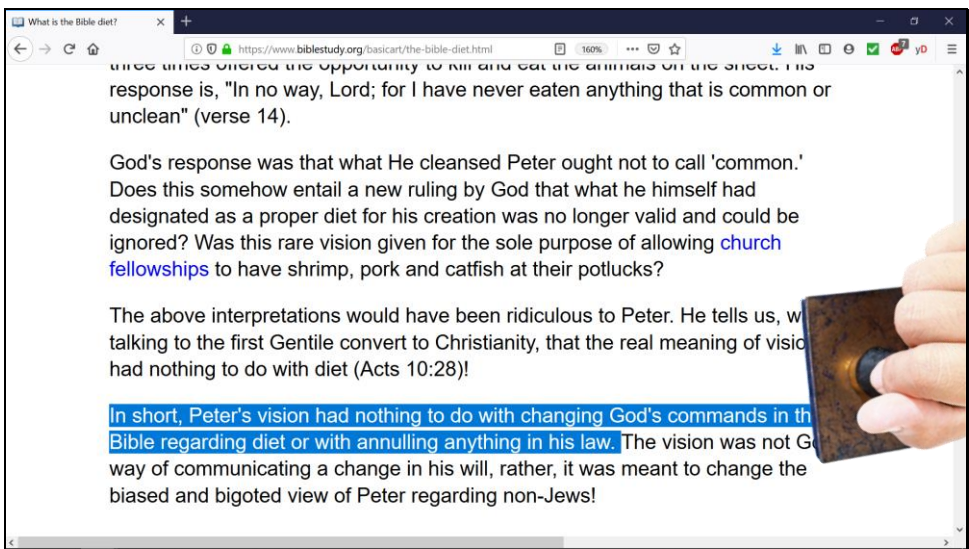
¹¹⁷ Acts 10:11-13



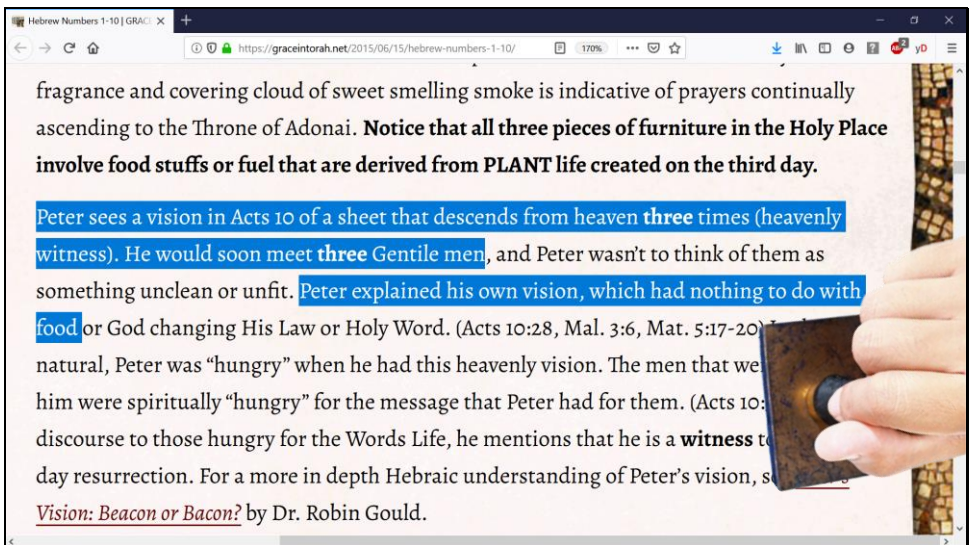
Therefore, GOD could not have made this message any clearer! And no one can legitimately claim that Peter would have sinned if he got up, **killed** an unclean animal, and **ate** it that day. In fact, he would have sinned if he didn't since the vision contained that exact heavenly command.

However, we are very familiar with all of the Comprehensive Continuance arguments against a literal interpretation of the vision GOD gave to Peter. So, let's address a few of those objections against a literal interpretation of the vision before we begin, and perhaps a few extra ears and hearts might be opened before we dive into the truth of Acts chapter 10.

Many have been convinced by various teachers that Peter's vision was *purely symbolic*! And they now believe that the commands and the vision of the sheet containing the animals have "*nothing to do with food*". And there are generally two concepts used to prop up this approach to the sheet vision.

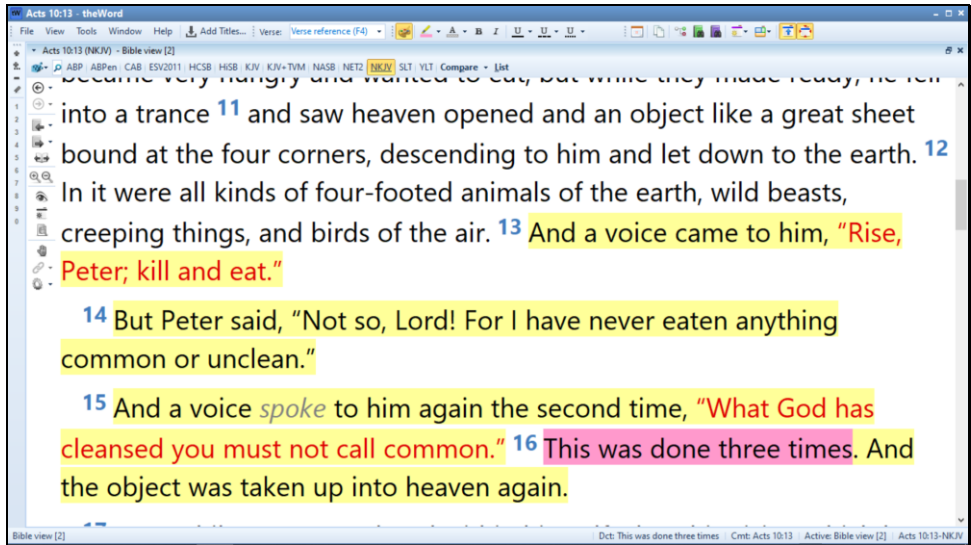


First, many Comprehensive Continuance teachers will emphatically make the point that Peter interacted with the LORD about the vision 3 times. And later, they will point out that 3 men came from the household of Cornelius to where Peter was staying. Therefore, the claim is made that this *numerical coincidence* is somehow proof of the supposedly symbolic nature of the vision.

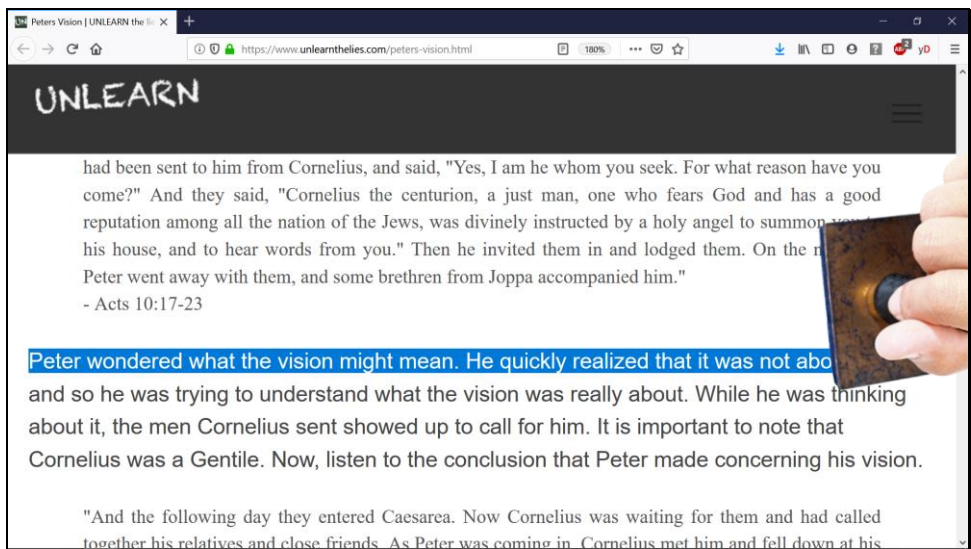


We should explain here, that the claim's reference to "three times" is referring to how, three separate times, GOD told Peter to "rise, kill, and eat" of the animals in the sheet. Then, three separate times Peter said, "Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or

unclean.”, and three separate times Peter was told: “What God has cleansed you must not call common.”



So, can the literal meaning of this vision and dialog between Peter and the voice from heaven that He called “LORD” be ignored? Can we discard the obvious literal meaning of this passage based on the fact that it happened three times?



Well, the answer to those questions is most certainly: no! And we can confidently say this for at least four very clear reasons.

First, not one single symbolic passage of the Bible was used to deliver what Scholars call “an Imperative Command”. Or, said another way, symbolic passages in the Bible are “descriptive” not “prescriptive”. Truly, GOD does not use symbolic visions to issue commandments to His servants, because people would begin to doubt or debate the commandments of GOD!

For example, when GOD showed Daniel the vision of the four beasts that represented four major kingdoms on the earth, the vision only described the future. And when GOD showed John the visions of the first and second beasts in the book of Revelation, the visions only described the future. But these descriptive visions, *and all other visions in the Bible that are clearly symbolic*, **describe** future events, and never include commands to the recipient, like: “**rise, kill, and eat!**”!



Thus, Peter himself wrote: **No prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.**¹¹⁸

And this leads us to the second reason we cannot discard the literal meaning of Peter’s vision, and that reason is: symbolic visions are visions that cannot be interpreted literally in a logical way.

¹¹⁸ 2 Peter 1:20-21

Now what we mean by that statement is: in a symbolic vision, some representative item is used as a symbol that somehow corresponds to some literal item. And *because of the nature of the vision*, a reading that does not convert the symbols of the vision over to their corresponding literal items, cannot communicate an understandable message or inform the recipient.

For example, when Nebuchadnezzar was given the dream of the “great image” *it made no sense to him until Daniel told him his dream and converted the symbols of the dream*, by explaining that they were kingdoms.

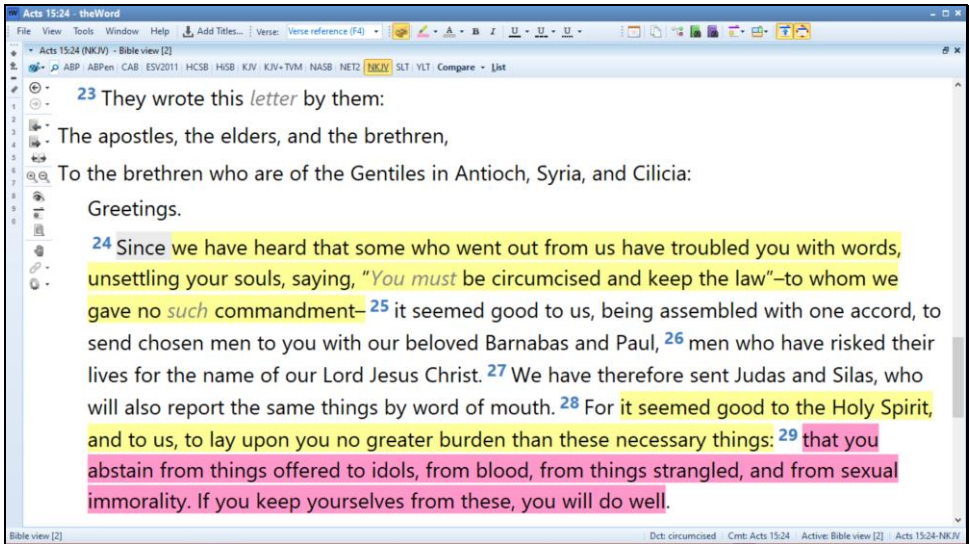


But, even though Peter initially wondered what the vision and dialog meant because it challenged everything he ever knew about food, his vision (and the dialog that accompanied it) can be interpreted in a perfectly literal way, without converting any supposed symbols! And this means that no symbolism was used!

In fact, if symbolism is forced onto a text that can be literally understood as it was given, it puts the interpreter in the seat of authority, instead of Almighty GOD! And such sin is even more egregious when discussing passages that involve the LORD issuing clear commands from heaven!

Next, the third reason we cannot discard the literal meaning of Peter’s vision is: *The Apostles, Elders, and Jerusalem Congregation officially*

affirmed the literal understanding of the vision in Acts chapter 15 and Acts chapter 21.

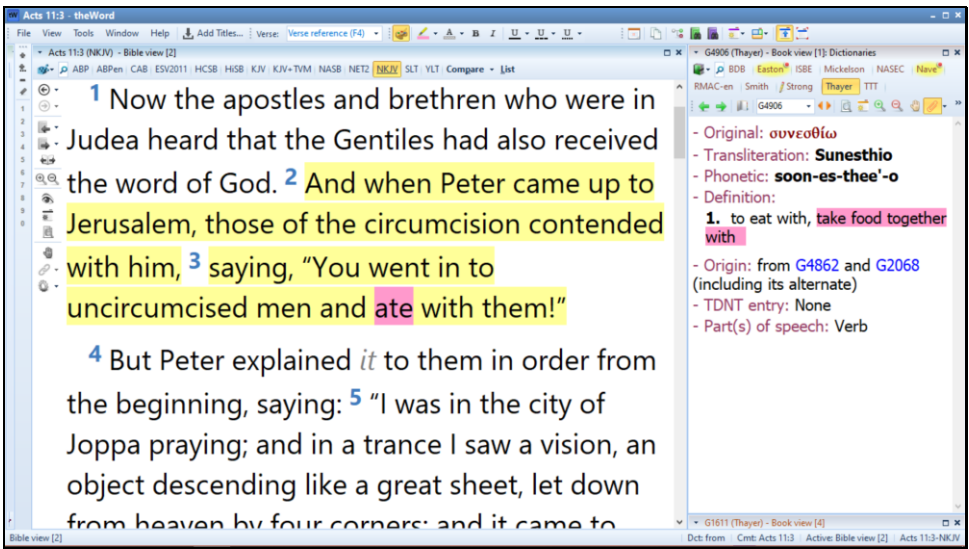


Yes, we know this is true because, if the vision “*had nothing to do with the animals in the sheet being food*” as some deceivers claim, the Apostles would have insisted that the Gentiles obey the ordinances of Leviticus chapter 11! Meanwhile, they said the opposite and wrote that they only had to avoid four things that were not listed in Leviticus chapter 11.

Likewise, the fourth reason we cannot discard the literal meaning of Peter’s vision is this: eventually Peter accepted the literal, full meaning of the vision! And Scripture records that Peter ate with Gentiles and even “lived in the manner of Gentiles” in the context of food!

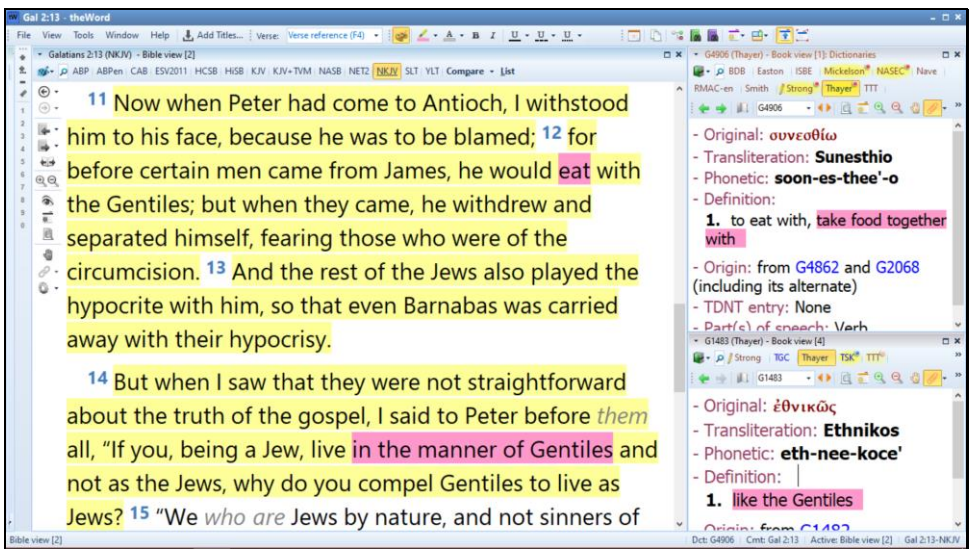
For example, in Acts chapter 11, it is written: When Peter came up to Jerusalem, those of the circumcision contended with him, saying, “**You went in to uncircumcised men and ate with them!**”¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ Acts 11:2-3

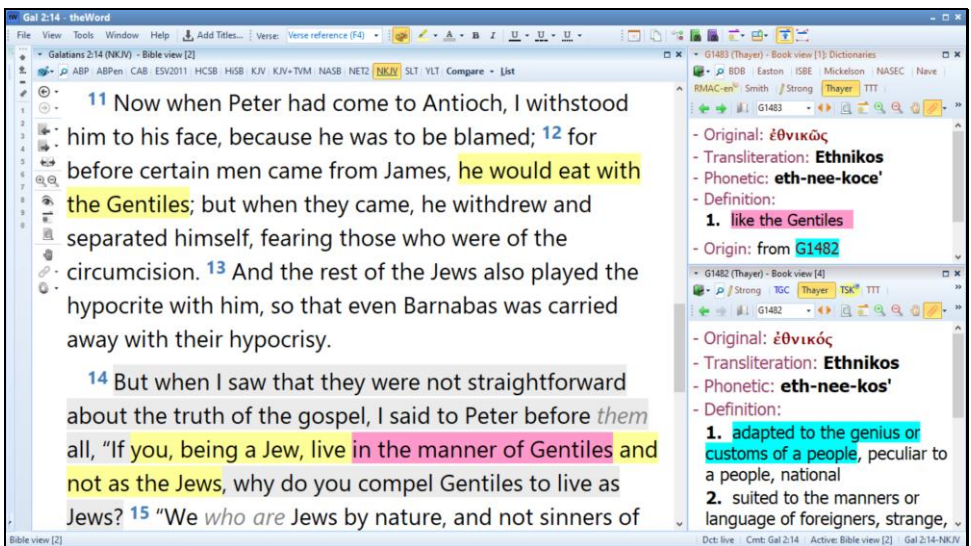


And in Galatians chapter 2, it is written: **Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy. But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, "If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?"¹²⁰**

¹²⁰ Galatians 2:11-14



In this second passage about eating with Gentiles, and compelling Gentiles to live as Jews by avoiding eating with them when those of the circumcision were around, Paul recounts that he said to Peter: **“You, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews”**. And when we consider the context, and the events of Acts, it is very clear that Peter eventually obeyed the command to **“rise, kill, and eat”** of the animals in the sheet.



Plus, Paul himself (who was raised eating only Levitically “clean” animals as a second-generation Pharisee) most certainly **“lived in the manner of Gentiles”** after the events of Acts chapter 10. And we can

be sure of this because He wrote: “I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself...”¹²¹

The screenshot shows a Bible software window titled "Rom 14:14 theWord". The main text area displays the following passage: "judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in *our* brother's way. 14 I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that *there is* nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him *it is* unclean. 15 Yet if your brother is grieved because of *your* food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died. 16 Therefore do not let your good be spoken of as evil: 17 for the

Two dictionary windows are open. The top window, titled "G1492 (Thayer) - Book view [1] - Dictionaries", shows the entry for "to know" with the following definitions:

- 3. to know
 - a. to know of anything
 - b. to know, i.e. get knowledge of, understand, perceive
 - 1. of any fact
 - 2. the force and meaning of something which has definite meaning
 - 3. to know how, to be skilled in

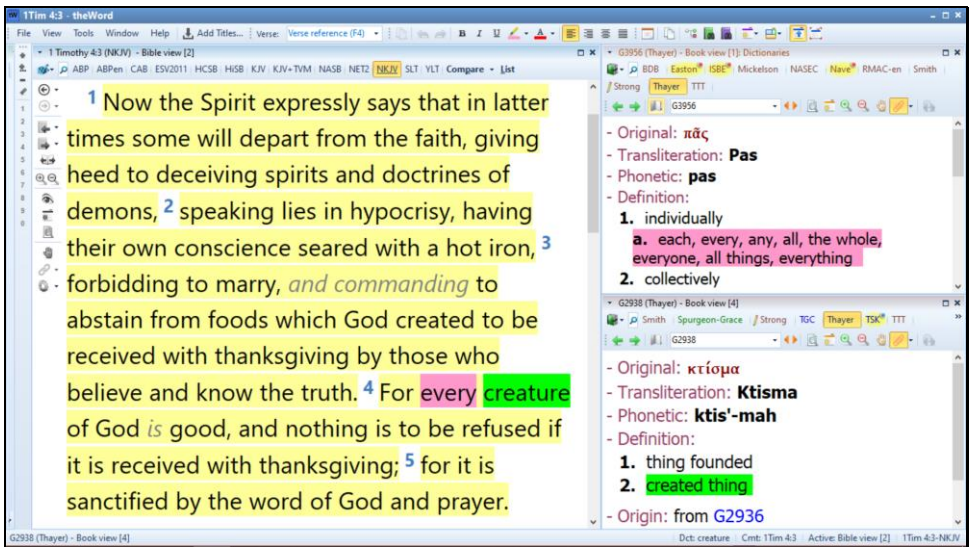
The bottom window, titled "G3982 (Thayer) - Book view [4]", shows the entry for "to persuade" with the following information:

- Original: πειθω
- Transliteration: Peitho
- Phonetic: pi'-tho
- Definition:
 - 1. persuade
 - a. to persuade, i.e. to induce one by words to believe
 - b. to make friends of, to win over

Similarly, Paul explained to Timothy: Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.¹²²

¹²¹ Romans 14:14

¹²² 1 Timothy 4:1-5

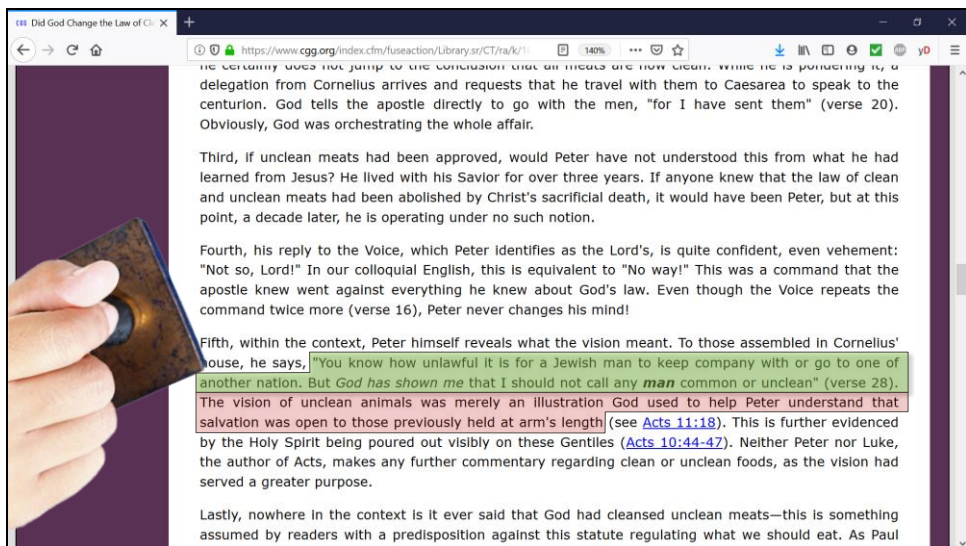


So, now that we have established that there are many Biblical facts that obviously contradict a symbolic interpretation of the extraordinarily clear message GOD issued to Peter in Acts chapter 10, we must deal with the other common objection the Comprehensive Continuance teachers frequently raise.

Four Biblical Reasons Why We Cannot Disregard The Literal Meaning of Peter's Vision:

- 1. Not one single symbolic passage of the Bible was used to deliver what Scholars call "an Imperative Command".**
- 2. Symbolic visions are visions that cannot be interpreted literally in a logical way.**
- 3. The Apostles, Elders, and Jerusalem Congregation officially affirmed the literal understanding of the vision in Acts chapter 15 and Acts chapter 21.**
- 4. Eventually Peter accepted the literal, full meaning of the vision. And Scripture records that Peter ate with Gentiles and even "lived in the manner of Gentiles" in the context of food!**

Those teachers will claim that Peter's words located in verse 28 of Acts chapter 10 demand that we interpret Peter's vision symbolically. And they commonly use verse 28 to try to overturn all of the many clear passages that indicate that foods no longer recommend us to GOD.

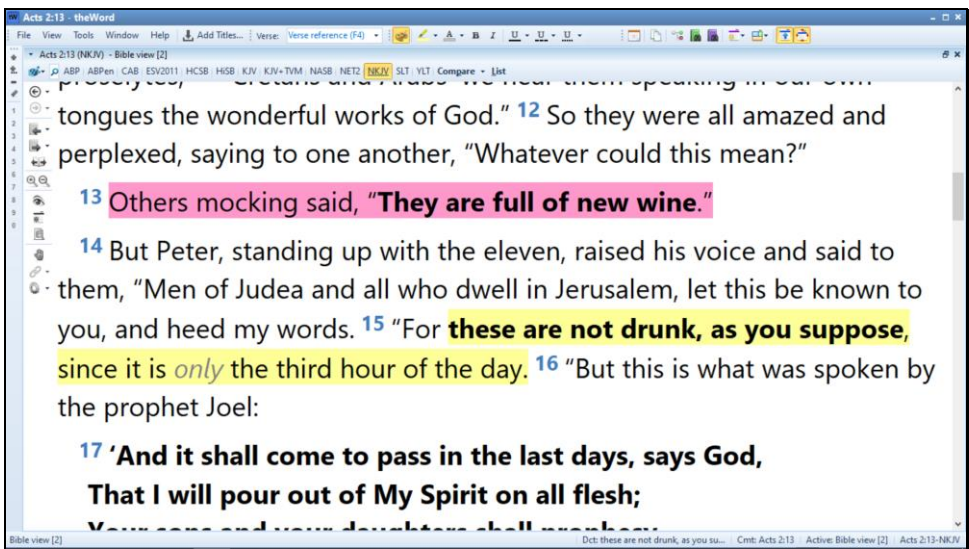


Now, verse 28 of Acts chapter 10 records the very first words Peter said when he entered the home of Cornelius. And, before we read this one frequently misunderstood verse, we must understand some important facts about the context of this passage.

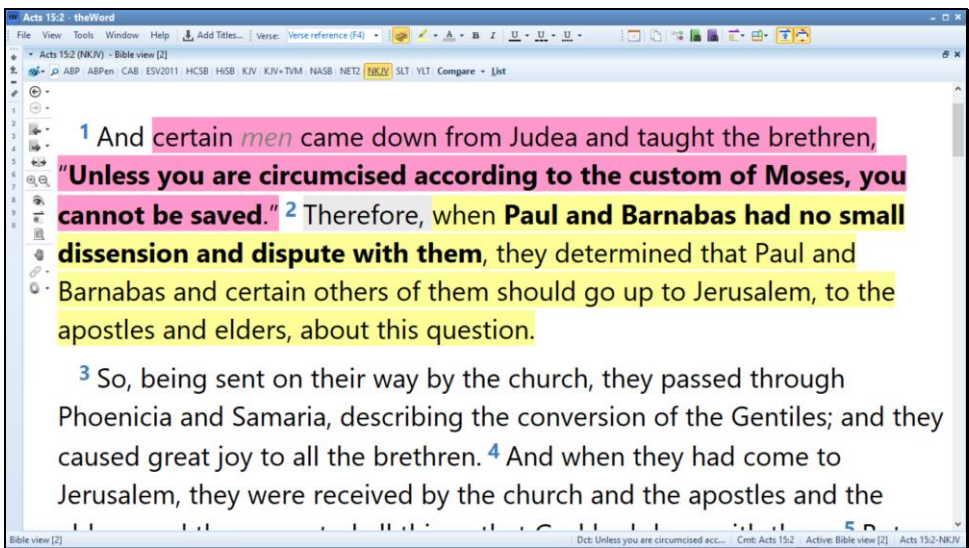
First, the book of Acts is what is called a “historical narrative”. And that means that Luke was writing an historical account of what happened, in the order it occurred. Also, it means that Luke was recording what people said, and some of those quotes most certainly have to be analyzed within the historical context that surrounds them.

For example, in the book of Acts, Luke recorded that some people said about our LORD’s disciples at Pentecost: “**They are full of new wine.**”¹²³ And then Luke recorded Peter addressing that accusation, while he explained what was really happening. Thus, for all we know, those who made that initial allegation could have been part of the three thousand souls who were added to their number that day!

¹²³ Acts 2:13



Also, as another example of how we have to analyze quotes carefully in books of the Bible that contain “historical narrative”, Luke also recorded: **Certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.”**¹²⁴ So, if someone ignores the fact that the Apostles disagreed with that statement, they could mistakenly use the quote to support heresy.



¹²⁴ Acts 15:1-2

So we must recognize that later Luke recorded that those men were officially contradicted in the letter the Apostles, Elders, and Saints in Jerusalem issued, which said: **“We have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, ‘You must be circumcised and keep the law’– to whom we gave no such commandment...”**¹²⁵

So, you see, because every event in the “historical narrative” portions of the Bible unfolds in a chronological manner, we must be especially careful when dealing with quotes that are later contradicted, especially when those quotes came from an individual who is about to experience some new and unexpected things!

And the fact is that Peter said the words of Acts 10:28 before he heard all of the details about an encounter between Cornelius and an angel! Plus, Peter said the words of Acts 10:28 before he saw the HOLY SPIRIT fall on all those who heard the Gospel that day! And the HOLY SPIRIT falling on uncircumcised, Levitically “unclean” Gentiles was most certainly new and unexpected, at that time!

Also, we must add to these very important facts the understanding that Peter never again repeated the concept (or principle) that he stated in Acts 10:28, even when he recounted all of the events of Acts chapter 10 later in Acts chapter 11! On the contrary, Peter always made the main lesson he learned in Acts 10 the fact that the HOLY SPIRIT fell on the Levitically “unclean” Gentiles just as He fell on the Levitically “clean” Jews.

And Peter openly contradicted those who said about the Gentiles who believed: **“It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.”**¹²⁶

¹²⁵ Acts 15:24

¹²⁶ Acts 15:5

Things we must understand about Acts 10:28:

1. **The book of Acts is “historical narrative”, therefore Luke was writing an historical account that included what various people said. And some of those quotes must be analyzed by the context that surrounds them.**
2. **We must be especially careful when dealing with quotes in historical narratives, especially when those quotes came from an individual who is about to experience some new and unexpected things!**
3. **Peter said the words of Acts 10:28 BEFORE he heard all of the details about an encounter between Cornelius and an angel! Plus, Peter said the words of Acts 10:28 BEFORE he saw the HOLY SPIRIT fall on all those who heard the Gospel that day!**
4. **Peter never again repeated the concept (or principle) that he stated in Acts 10:28 – even when he recounted all of the events of Acts chapter 10 later in Acts chapter 11!**
5. **Peter openly contradicted those who said about the Gentiles who believed: “It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.”**

Yes, Peter very directly contradicted that claim by saying: “God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they.”¹²⁷ And with these facts in mind, we are ready to hear verse 28 of Acts chapter 10.

In that passage, *before the events at the home of Cornelius unfolded*, Peter said: “You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean.”¹²⁸

Those of the Comprehensive Continuance position use this verse like a hammer in their attempts to destroy the literal meaning of Peter’s vision, Peter’s words in Acts chapter 15, the conclusions of the Jerusalem Council, the plain words of Paul about food, and any verse that contradicts the faulty idea that the food laws of Leviticus 11 are eternally binding on every disciple of JESUS!

Meanwhile, these words that Peter never again repeated, in no way contradict the literal meaning of the vision he was given when they are

¹²⁷ Acts 15:5-11

¹²⁸ Acts 10:27-29

handled correctly! Or said another way, when we read verse 28 of Acts chapter 10, we must think of the word: “and”, instead of the word: “or”!

Truly, if we accept the vision from heaven as *literally true*, we can also accept Peter’s statement in verse 28 as equally true! But if we try to use verse 28 to erase the message GOD sent from heaven, we pit one verse against another within the same chapter of the Bible! And by doing this, we insist that people choose between one passage OR another passage!

But those who listen to every word that proceeds from the mouth of GOD understand that we can listen to all that the vision was communicating AND we can listen to all that Peter said! And they recognize the fact that they don’t actually contradict one another!

You see, Peter never denied a literal interpretation of the vision after his initial refusals that proved he thought the vision was about food. And Acts 10:28 never actually mentions that Peter’s statement had anything to do with the vision. However, what Peter said was a connected fact that perfectly harmonized with the message of the vision!

Key facts about Acts 10:28

(Then he said to them, “You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean.”)

- 1. Those of the Comprehensive Continuance position use this verse like a hammer to destroy the literal meaning of Peter’s vision, Peter’s words in Acts chapter 15, the conclusions of the Jerusalem Council, the plain words of Paul about food, and any verse that contradicts the faulty idea that the food laws of Leviticus 11 are eternally binding on every disciple of JESUS!**
- 2. These words that Peter never again repeated - in no way contradict the literal meaning of the vision he was given, when they are handled correctly! (Instead they flow from the literal meaning of the vision)**
- 3. If we accept the vision from heaven as literally true, we can also accept Peter’s statement in verse 28 as equally true! But if we try to use verse 28 to erase the message GOD sent from heaven, we pit one verse against another within the same chapter of the Bible!**
- 4. A literal understanding of the sheet vision does not contradict Acts 10:28, but a symbolic interpretation of the vision contradicts many other passages!**
- 5. Peter never denied a literal interpretation of the vision after his initial refusals that proved he thought the vision WAS about food, and Acts 10:28 never actually mentions that it was about the vision.**

Please ask yourself, “*From a Levitical standpoint, why would Peter ever call any man “common” or “unclean”?*” Could he have known if Cornelius had leprosy? Could he have known if Cornelius had recently come in contact with a dead body? Or, did Peter think that Cornelius had recently experienced a discharge?

I think we can all agree that Peter thought: “it was unlawful to keep company with or go to those of another nation” because Jews thought that Gentiles were unclean due to the food laws of Leviticus 11!

After all, GOD said in Leviticus chapter 11 that all who ate unclean animals were “**unclean until evening**”¹²⁹! So, Peter had been calling Gentiles “*unclean*” simply *because of their diet*.

And this was also why the religious leaders: “**did not go into the Praetorium, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover.**”¹³⁰

John 18:28 Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas into the Praetorium, and it was early; and **they themselves did not enter into the Praetorium so that they would not be defiled**, but might eat the Passover.

G4232

πρατώριον praitōrion

prahee-to'-ree-on

Of Latin origin; the praetorium or **governor's court room** (sometimes including the whole edifice and camp):—(common, judgment) hall (of judgment), **palace**, praetorium.

Jubilees 22:16 And you also, my son, Jacob, remember my words, and keep the commandments of Abraham, your father. **Separate yourself from the Gentiles, and do not eat with them**, and do not perform deeds like theirs. And do not become associates of theirs. Because their deeds are defiled, and all their ways are contaminated, and despicable, and abominable.

Josephus Antiquities of the Jews 13:245-247 “[the Jews]...**did not come into contact with other people because of their separateness.**”

You see, the Praetorium was where Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor was staying. And, at that time, many Jews were convinced that they might be defiled by *even entering* the home of someone who ate unclean foods.

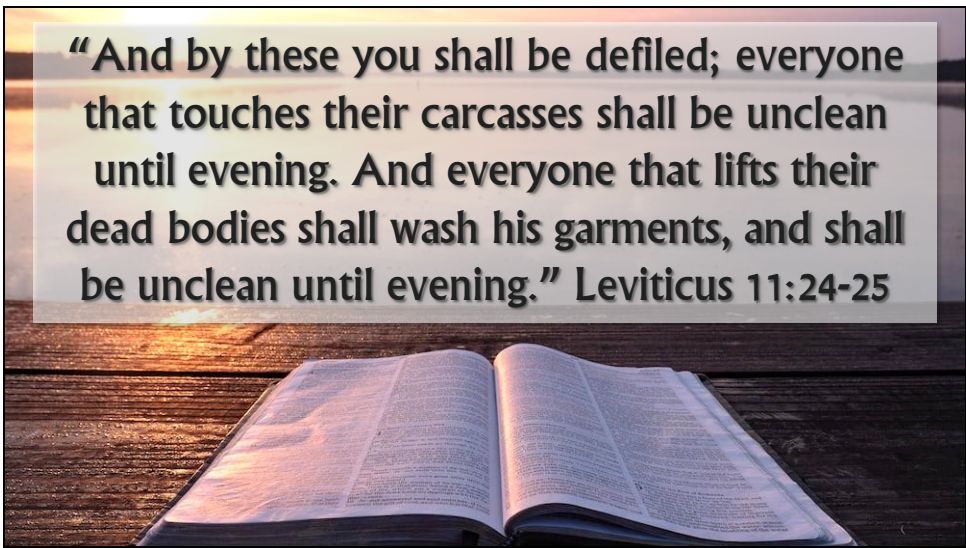
Thus, before the HOLY SPIRIT demonstrated the reality that *purification no longer came through Levitical works of the law*, the vision and the instructions he received from the HOLY SPIRIT emboldened Peter to at least *go to a Gentile's home*. And, when he went, he was beginning to understand that he had to (at a minimum) stop calling them unclean.

¹²⁹ Leviticus 11:24-25

¹³⁰ John 18:28

Likewise, we must also consider that Peter might have said those words for a reason other than the vision he was given. In fact, Peter might have said **“God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean”**, simply because JESUS had taught him earlier: **“It is not what enters into the mouth that defiles the man, but what proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man.”**¹³¹

Meanwhile, when Peter stated that he could no longer call someone who regularly consumed unclean animals “unclean” he demonstrated that he at least understood parts of Leviticus 11 were abrogated at this point because that passage said: all those who ate “unclean” foods were “unclean until evening”¹³².



“And by these you shall be defiled; everyone that touches their carcasses shall be unclean until evening. And everyone that lifts their dead bodies shall wash his garments, and shall be unclean until evening.” Leviticus 11:24-25

So, even saying that he was **“not to call any man common or unclean”** demonstrated a clear abrogation of the words of Leviticus 11 that declare all who consume unclean animals **“unclean”**!

But *after* Peter saw everything that happened that day, when he retold the entire series of events later in Acts chapter 11, he noticeably left out the principle **“God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean.”**

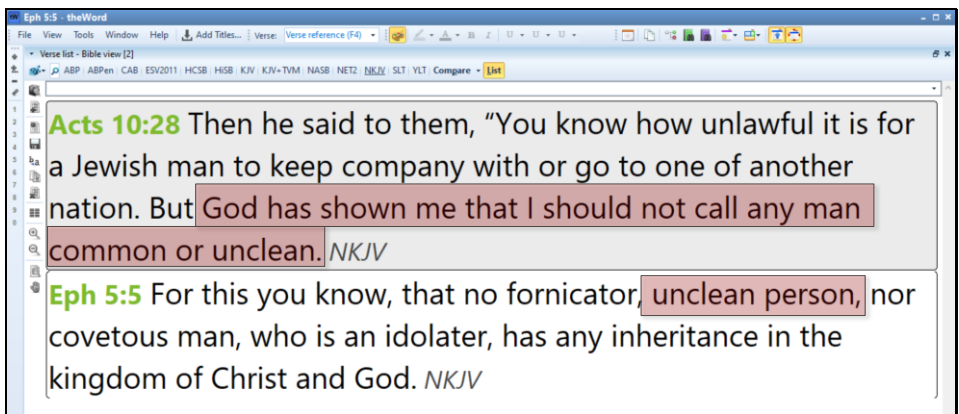
¹³¹ Matthew 15:11

¹³² Leviticus 11:24-25

“I was in the city of Joppa praying; and in a trance I saw a vision, an object descending like a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came to me. “When I observed it intently and considered, I saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. “And I heard a voice saying to me, ‘Rise, Peter; kill and eat.’ “But I said, ‘Not so, Lord! For nothing common or unclean has at any time entered my mouth.’ “But the voice answered me again from heaven, ‘What God has cleansed you must not call common.’ “Now this was done three times, and all were drawn up again into heaven. “At that very moment, three men stood before the house where I was, having been sent to me from Caesarea. “Then the Spirit told me to go with them, doubting nothing. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered the man’s house. “And he told us how he had seen an angel standing in his house, who said to him, ‘Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon whose surname is Peter, ‘who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved.’ “And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning. “Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, ‘John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ “If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?” Acts 11:5-17

Thus, it might be helpful for those of the Comprehensive Continuance position to recognize that the Apostle Paul actually called certain people unclean later in Scripture! For example, Paul wrote: **For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.**¹³³

So, is this a contradiction in Scripture? Only if we handle Acts 10:28 as the Comprehensive Continuance teachers handle it! But, if we recognize that Peter was specifically speaking about physical uncleanness (and the food laws that the sheet vision was dealing with), but Paul was dealing with spiritual uncleanness, then we can easily reconcile these two passages!



¹³³ Ephesians 5:5

Therefore, we hope that you are asking yourself now, **“What then can make a person spiritually unclean?”** because if you are asking that question, you are beginning to think like the Apostles in Acts chapter 15!

And we say this because, the Jerusalem Letter of Acts 15 specifically listed four physical things that can make a person spiritually unclean according to the Bible: sexual immorality, consuming foods that were sacrificed in honor of an idol, consuming blood, and consuming strangled animals because they were killed in a manner that did not allow their blood to drain from their bodies. And *while the sheet vision most certainly abrogated the food regulations of Leviticus 11*, it did not abrogate these four restricted activities.

“The apostles, the elders, and the brethren, To the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia: Greetings. Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, “You must be circumcised and keep the law” – to whom we gave no such commandment– it seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul.. who will also report the same things by word of mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that you **abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality.** If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.” Acts 15:23-29

So, with these facts established, we are ready to read Acts chapter 10 together. And we pray: **“He who has ears to hear”**, LORD please **“let him hear!”**¹³⁴

Luke records: **There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment, a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always.**

¹³⁴ Matthew 11:15, 13:9, 13:43, etc

About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God coming in and saying to him, “Cornelius!”¹³⁵

Just in case someone might be thinking that Peter was concerned that Cornelius was “unclean” because he was a Roman Centurion who would come into contact with dead bodies, we should point out here that Peter did not say: it was unlawful for him to keep company with or go to a Roman Centurion, and Peter did not say that he was to no longer call Roman Centurions “unclean”. Therefore, since Peter specifically said “**one of another nation**” and “**any man**”, we can deduce that food was his concern at that time.

But with that addressed we see that Luke also recorded: **And when he observed him, he was afraid, and said, “What is it, lord?” So he said to him, “Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God. “Now send men to Joppa, and send for Simon whose surname is Peter. “He is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea. He will tell you what you must do.”¹³⁶**

Please notice that Luke recorded: this was all said to Cornelius in a vision, just as Peter received a vision later on in this same chapter! But no one tries to claim that the words the angel spoke to Cornelius were symbolic. So, why should we claim that about Peter’s vision?

THERE WAS A CERTAIN MAN IN CAESAREA CALLED CORNELIUS, A CENTURION OF WHAT WAS CALLED THE ITALIAN REGIMENT, A DEVOUT MAN AND ONE WHO FEARED GOD WITH ALL HIS HOUSEHOLD, WHO GAVE ALMS GENEROUSLY TO THE PEOPLE, AND PRAYED TO GOD ALWAYS. ABOUT THE NINTH HOUR OF THE DAY HE SAW CLEARLY IN **A VISION** AN ANGEL OF GOD COMING IN AND SAYING TO HIM, “CORNELIUS!” ACTS 10:1-3



¹³⁵ Acts 10:1-3

¹³⁶ Acts 10:4-6

With that in mind, we read that Luke wrote: **And when the angel who spoke to him had departed, Cornelius called two of his household servants and a devout soldier from among those who waited on him continually. So when he had explained all these things to them, he sent them to Joppa.**¹³⁷

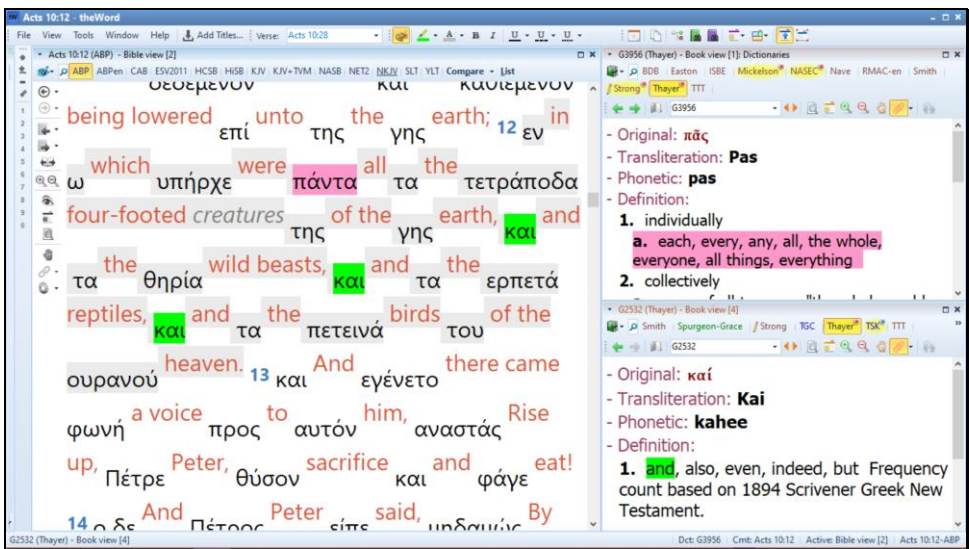
Just hearing the unrepeated words of an angel caused Cornelius to obey! But what if you heard the voice of **the LORD** from heaven telling you to do something three times while showing you exactly what the command was referring to? Well, if you are a devout, GOD-fearing person, you obey that vision, just as Cornelius obeyed the words of the angel!

And with this understood we read: **The next day, as they went on their journey and drew near the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour. Then he became very hungry and wanted to eat; but while they made ready, he fell into a trance and saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth. In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. And a voice came to him, “Rise, Peter; kill and eat.”**¹³⁸

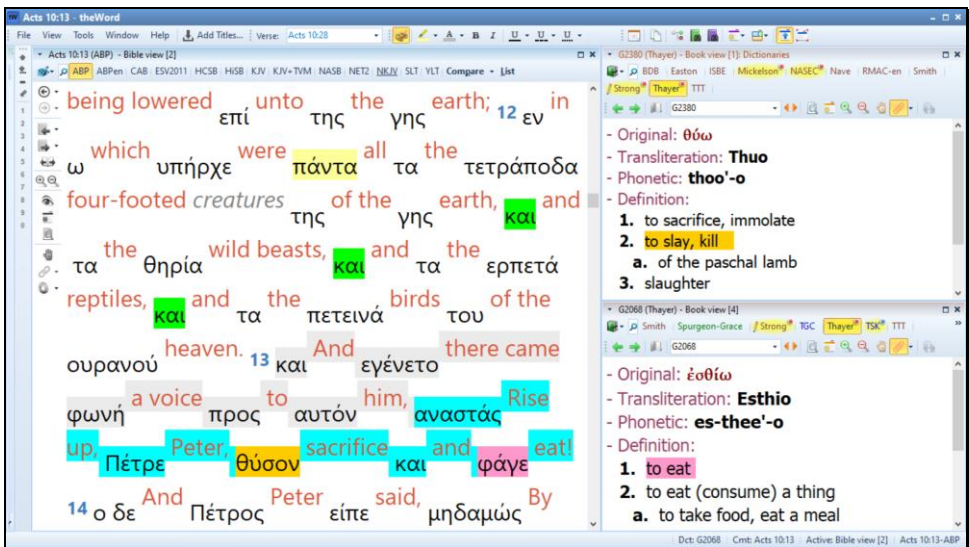
Luke literally recorded that the sheet contained: **“all the quadrupeds of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and the flying things of heaven”**. And by using the all-inclusive word: **“pán-ta”** followed by a list separated by the Greek equivalent of the word **“and”**, Luke made it clear that all of the quadrupeds, all of the wild beasts, all of the creeping things, and all of the flying things were in that sheet. Or, in other words, the word **“all”** applied to each of the animal types listed, just as if I were to say: **“bring me all of the papers, and the pencils, and the pens.”**

¹³⁷ Acts 10:7-8

¹³⁸ Acts 10:9-13



And, with that all-inclusive image laid out before Peter, the voice from heaven said to him: **“anastás Pétre - Thúson kai pháge”**. And this phrase literally means: **“rise up, Peter – kill and eat”**.



But Peter said, **“Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean.”** And a voice spoke to him again the second time, **“What God has cleansed you must not call common.”** This was done three times. And the object was taken up into heaven again.¹³⁹

¹³⁹ Acts 10:14-16

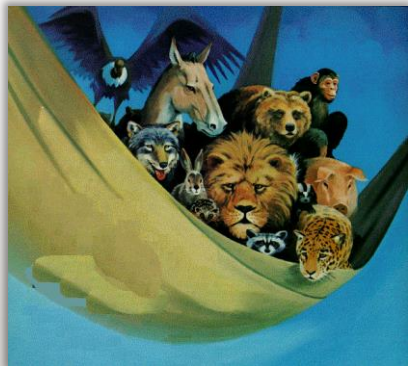
Obviously, Peter recognized that many of the animals in the sheet were Levitically unclean, and he plainly acknowledged that he had never eaten of those Levitically unclean animals.

“NOT SO, LORD! **FOR I HAVE NEVER EATEN ANYTHING COMMON OR UNCLEAN.**” AND A VOICE SPOKE TO HIM AGAIN THE SECOND TIME, “WHAT GOD HAS CLEANSED YOU MUST NOT CALL COMMON.” THIS WAS DONE THREE TIMES. AND THE OBJECT WAS TAKEN UP INTO HEAVEN AGAIN. ACTS 10:14-16



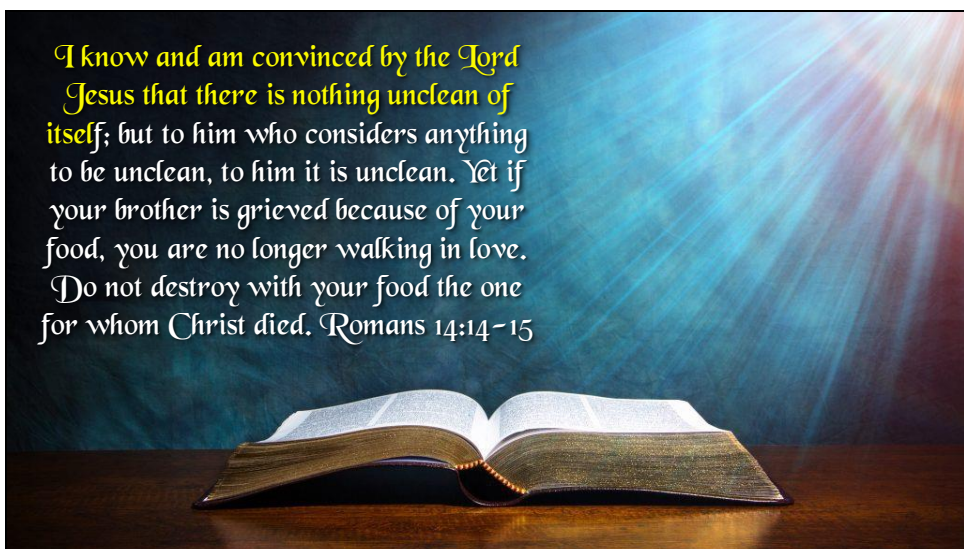
But then the voice literally replied: “**What God cleansed you are not to declare unclean**”. Brothers and sisters, this is the last word from heaven on the animals Peter saw in his vision. And if we are to live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of our GOD, we must include these words as well! To deny that command from the LORD is to disobey Him!

“NOT SO, LORD! **FOR I HAVE NEVER EATEN ANYTHING COMMON OR UNCLEAN.**” AND A VOICE SPOKE TO HIM AGAIN THE SECOND TIME, “**WHAT GOD HAS CLEANSED YOU MUST NOT CALL COMMON.**” THIS WAS DONE THREE TIMES. AND THE OBJECT WAS TAKEN UP INTO HEAVEN AGAIN. ACTS 10:14-16



So we see, based on this clear declaration from Heaven, Paul later wrote: **I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. Yet if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died.**¹⁴⁰

Plainly, just as the voice from heaven proclaimed, the Apostle Paul knew and affirmed “**nothing is unclean**” of itself, and he plainly stated immediately after that verse: he was speaking about food! Therefore, when the LORD announced: “**What God cleansed you are not to declare unclean**”, it was most certainly referring to food!



I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. Yet if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died. Romans 14:14-15

Thus, Hebrews explains: **It is good that the heart be established by grace, not with foods which have not profited those who have been occupied with them.**¹⁴¹ And salvation by grace through faith in JESUS CHRIST is the polar opposite of salvation through “***the works of the law***”: “**concerned only with foods, drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation**”¹⁴²!

But, returning to Acts, next Luke recorded: **Now while Peter wondered within himself what this vision which he had seen**

¹⁴⁰ Romans 14:14-15

¹⁴¹ Hebrews 13:9

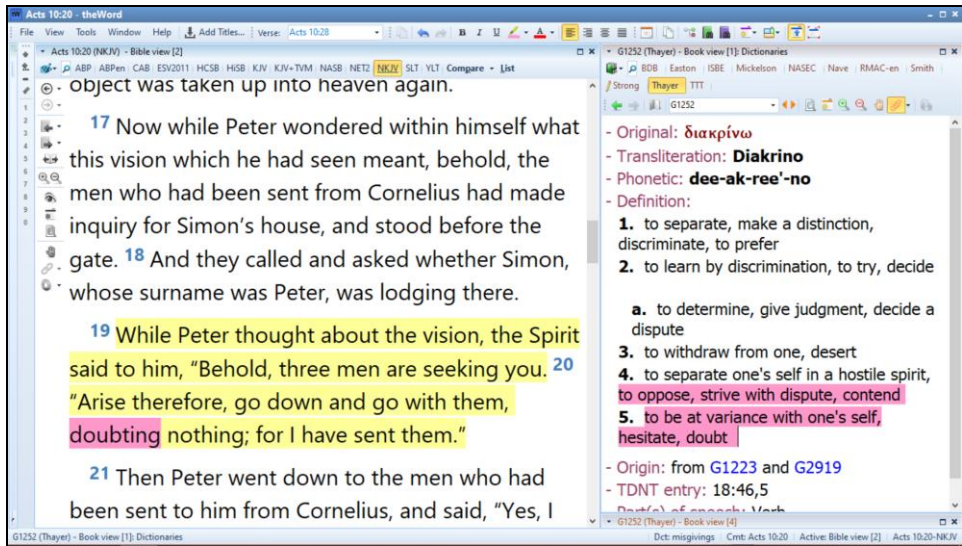
¹⁴² Hebrews 9:10

meant, behold, the men who had been sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate. And they called and asked whether Simon, whose surname was Peter, was lodging there. While Peter thought about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are seeking you. "Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them."¹⁴³

It is completely understandable that Peter would not want to jump to conclusions about what he had just seen and heard. After all, for over 1400 years the children of Israel had been faithfully avoiding many of the animals in that sheet.

But JESUS had prepared Peter for this vision when He said: "Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him, because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, thus purifying all foods?"¹⁴⁴

Plus, the HOLY SPIRIT also prepared Peter to witness all that the vision meant, when He instructed: "Behold, three men are seeking you. "Arise therefore, go down and go with them, debating nothing; for I have sent them."¹⁴⁵



The screenshot shows a Bible software window with the text of Acts 10:17-20. The text is as follows:

17 Now while Peter wondered within himself what this vision which he had seen meant, behold, the men who had been sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate. 18 And they called and asked whether Simon, whose surname was Peter, was lodging there.

19 While Peter thought about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are seeking you. 20 "Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them."

21 Then Peter went down to the men who had been sent to him from Cornelius, and said, "Yes, I

On the right side, a dictionary window is open for the Greek word **διακρίνω** (diakrino). The entry includes:

- Original: **διακρίνω**
- Transliteration: **Diakrino**
- Phonetic: **dee-ak-ree'-no**
- Definition:
 1. to separate, make a distinction, discriminate, to prefer
 2. to learn by discrimination, to try, decide
 - a. to determine, give judgment, decide a dispute
 3. to withdraw from one, desert
 4. to separate one's self in a hostile spirit, to oppose, strive with dispute, contend
 5. to be at variance with one's self, hesitate, doubt
- Origin: from **G1223** and **G2919**
- TDNT entry: **18:46,5**

¹⁴³ Acts 10:17-20

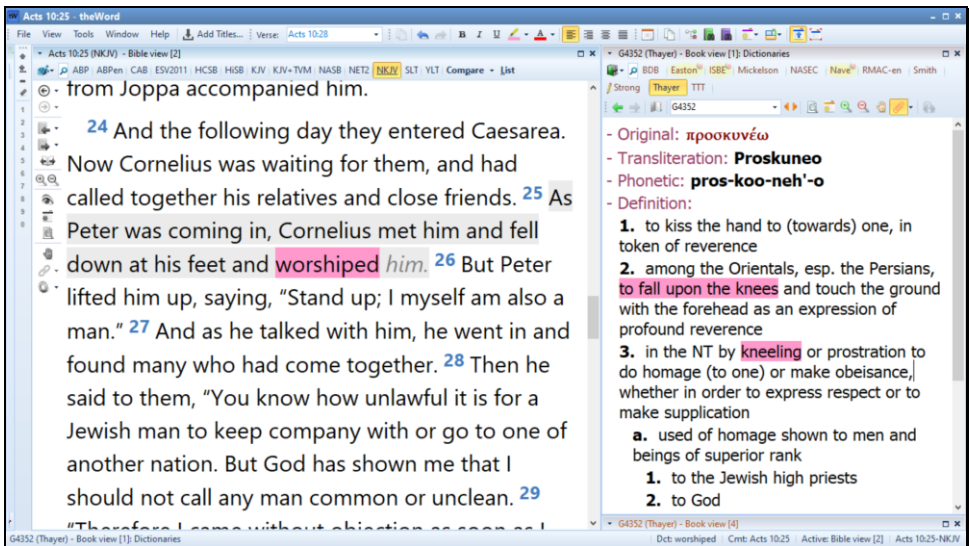
¹⁴⁴ Mark 7:18-19

¹⁴⁵ Acts 10:19-20

Therefore, because GOD so completely prepared Peter for this day, Luke went on to record: **Then Peter went down to the men who had been sent to him from Cornelius, and said, “Yes, I am he whom you seek. For what reason have you come?” And they said, “Cornelius the centurion, a just man, one who fears God and has a good reputation among all the nation of the Jews, was divinely instructed by a holy angel to summon you to his house, and to hear words from you.” Then he invited them in and lodged them. On the next day, Peter went away with them, and some brethren from Joppa accompanied him.**¹⁴⁶

And Luke describes their arrival by saying: **And the following day they entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting for them, and had called together his relatives and close friends. As Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped him. But Peter lifted him up, saying, “Stand up; I myself am also a man.”**¹⁴⁷

Now the word Luke used, which was mistranslated here as “**worshipped**” is pronounced: “**pros-koo-neh'-o**”. And it literally means “**to bow down before**”. Thus, since Cornelius was a GOD-fearing man, it would be more accurate to say that Cornelius “**fell down at Peter’s feet and bowed**”, but then Peter stopped him.



¹⁴⁶ Acts 10:21-23

¹⁴⁷ Acts 10:24-26

And with this understood, we see Luke continued his historical account by writing: **And as he talked with him, he went in and found many who had come together. Then he said to them, “You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean. “Therefore I came without objection as soon as I was sent for. I ask, then, for what reason have you sent for me?”**¹⁴⁸

Clearly, Peter was simply explaining to Cornelius why he **“came without objection as soon as he was sent for”**, but he was *not* describing the vision he had experienced! And Peter will make it clear, as this encounter unfolds, that he was learning more about what he had seen and heard earlier.

Thus, with that in mind, we see that Luke went on to write: **So Cornelius said, “Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, “and said, ‘Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your alms are remembered in the sight of God. ‘Send therefore to Joppa and call Simon here, whose surname is Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea. When he comes, he will speak to you.’ “So I sent to you immediately, and you have done well to come. Now therefore, we are all present before God, to hear all the things commanded you by God.”**¹⁴⁹

This is the first time Peter heard all of the details regarding his host’s encounter with an angel. And we see that these details had a profound effect on Peter when we read how he responded!

Luke explains: **Then Peter opened his mouth and said: “In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. “But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.”**¹⁵⁰

The fact that GOD sent a holy angel to the home of Cornelius proved to Peter that GOD was being more gracious and accepting of the

¹⁴⁸ Acts 10:27-29

¹⁴⁹ Acts 10:30-33

¹⁵⁰ Acts 10:34-35

Gentiles than he had ever imagined! And with this realization, Peter began to finally obey the command to preach the gospel to every nation!

Thus Peter said: **“The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ—He is Lord of all—that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached: “how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. “And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed by hanging on a tree.”¹⁵¹**

And Peter completed his gospel message that day by saying: **“Him God raised up on the third day, and showed Him openly, “not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God, even to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. “And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead. “To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins.”¹⁵²**

But next, the full scope of the sheet vision came into view, because: **While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered, “Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days.** ¹⁵³

Peter went from tentatively going to the home of Cornelius to later staying and eating with him! He went from realizing that he should not call Cornelius unclean, to admitting that GOD accepted all people who

¹⁵¹ Acts 10:36-39

¹⁵² Acts 10:40-43

¹⁵³ Acts 10:44-48

fear Him and work righteousness! And he went from preaching the Gospel to the Jews only, to preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles, also!

But at the end of the day, Peter and those of the circumcision who were with him were astonished, or more literally **“thrown into wonderment”** when they saw the HOLY SPIRIT fall on the Gentiles *in the same way that He had fallen on the Jews at Pentecost!* And after the events of this day, the Apostles never looked at food or the Gentiles in the same way again!

The screenshot shows a Bible software window titled "Acts 10:45 - theWord". The main text area displays the following passage:

receive remission of sins.”

44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word.

45 And those of the circumcision who believed were **astonished**, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. 46 For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered, 47 “Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we *have*?” 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days.

On the right side, a dictionary window for G1839 (Thayer) is open, showing the following information:

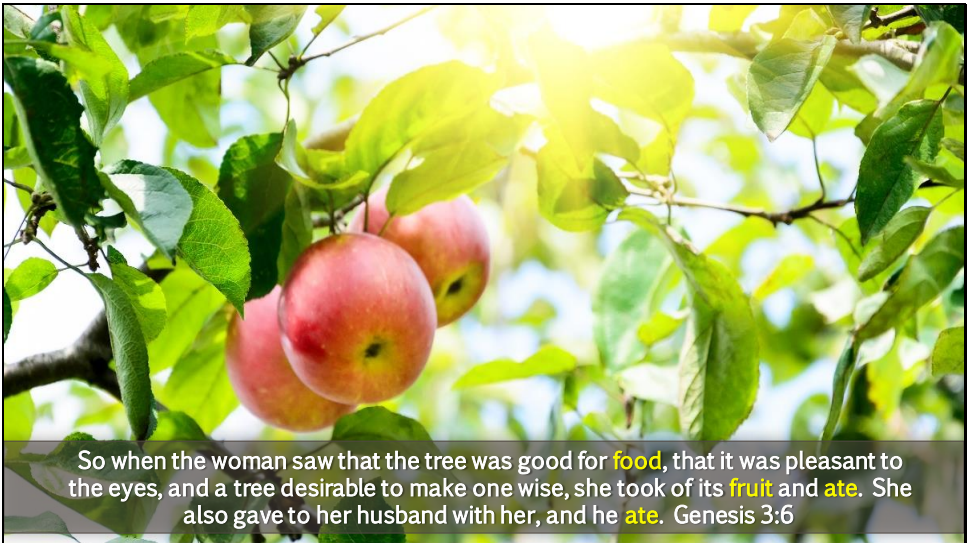
- Original: ἐξίστημι
- Transliteration: **Existemi**
- Phonetic: **ex-is'-tay-mee**
- Definition:
 1. to throw out of position, displace
 - a. to amaze, to astonish, throw into wonderment
 - b. to be amazed, astounded
 - c. to be out of one's mind, besides one's self, insane
- Origin: from G1537 and G2476
- TDNT entry: 09:39,2
- Part(s) of speech: Verb

And that is the *true* understanding of Acts chapter 10, when we keep it within the progressively revealed context of the Word of GOD, as those who follow all of the Bible and the Bible alone.

Chapter 5: Against the Allegorizing of Scripture

When GOD told Adam not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil¹⁵⁴, was it symbolic of something else, or was it about the literal fruit of a literal tree?

Without a doubt, the answer is: The passage is about the *literal* fruit of a *literal* tree because Scripture went on to record “**the woman took its fruit and ate”**, and “**gave to her husband... and he ate”**¹⁵⁵. So, in other words, if the Bible presents a *logically and textually consistent* literal interpretation, then the passage *must* be interpreted literally.



So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. Genesis 3:6

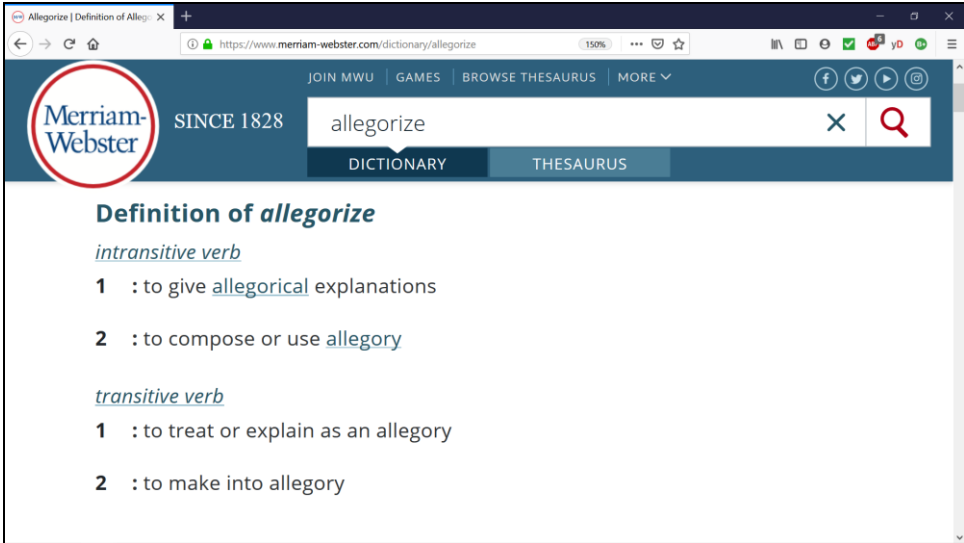
Therefore, anytime someone claims that GOD's command in Genesis 2:16-17, for example, is not to be read literally, then they appoint themselves to the position of being the master of the meaning of the text. In this way, they are claiming that they are free to arrive at a conclusion that suits their personal preferences.

So, we must understand that the abominable process of turning passages of the Bible that can be read literally into non-literal, allegorical texts, is called: “the Allegorizing of Scripture”. And we say this because the word “allegorize” means: “to give allegorical interpretations”, “to treat or explain as allegory”, or “to make into an

¹⁵⁴ Genesis 2: 16-17

¹⁵⁵ Genesis 3:6

allegory” concepts that were never intended to be considered allegorical.



A person guilty of this interpretational sin might say: *“the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was not a literal tree”*, but instead: *“it was a metaphor for some philosophical concept”*.

Or they might say: *“the serpent was not literally the devil”*, but instead: *“he was a personification of human weakness”*. Such examples demonstrate the dangers of allegorical interpretations. Because, anytime someone insists that a passage of the Bible that can be logically understood with a literal interpretation must be understood in an allegorical, non-literal way, they are actually claiming that they can decide what GOD has said, instead of letting GOD speak for Himself!

Then, by doing this, they contradict GOD, His Son JESUS CHRIST, His holy Prophets, or His holy Apostles; because the Word of GOD plainly records that a literal Eve was tempted by a literal serpent¹⁵⁶ (called the devil and satan¹⁵⁷). And a literal Adam sinned when he also ate the fruit of the forbidden tree. And the truth is, when someone allegorizes passages of the Bible that GOD meant for us to understand literally, they are really attacking the authority of the Word of GOD!

¹⁵⁶ Genesis 3:4-5, 2 Corinthians 11:3,

¹⁵⁷ Revelation 12:9

Meanwhile, since the 1800s, many people have actually been attacking the authority of the Word of GOD when they deny the literal meaning of the days of creation in Genesis chapter 1. And they say things like: *“Even though Scripture says ‘evening’ and ‘morning’, and ‘day one’, ‘day two’, ‘day three’, and so on... these are not really literal 24-hour days”.*

However, such claims foolishly ignore the fact that when GOD declared the 4th commandment, He based it on the days of creation, and specifically said: **“For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.”**¹⁵⁸

So, did GOD mean that we should work for 6 billion years and rest for 1 billion years?¹⁵⁹ If so, why did JESUS our LORD have a weekly custom of going to the synagogue each Sabbath?¹⁶⁰ Or, for that matter, why did Paul have the same weekly custom?¹⁶¹

Likewise, why did the manna fall for 6 literal days of the week, but not on the seventh literal day?¹⁶² You see when someone allegorizes a passage that can and should be literally interpreted, they are really deceiving themselves and all who will listen to them! And their deception can be easily spotted because it will contradict many other passages in the Bible!

Day 1 Manna	Day 2 Manna	Day 3 Manna	Day 4 Manna	Day 5 Manna	Day 6 Manna	Day 7 No Manna!
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Then he said to them, “This is what the LORD has said: ‘Tomorrow is a Sabbath rest, a holy Sabbath to the LORD. Bake what you will bake today, and boil what you will boil; and lay up for yourselves all that remains, to be kept until morning.’” So they laid it up till morning, as Moses commanded; and it did not stink, nor were there any worms in it. Then Moses said, “Eat that today, for today is a Sabbath to the LORD; today you will not find it in the field. “Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will be none.” Exodus 16:23-26

¹⁵⁸ Exodus 20:11

¹⁵⁹ Exodus 20:8-10

¹⁶⁰ Luke 4:16

¹⁶¹ Acts 17:2

¹⁶² Exodus 16:23-26

Obviously, when GOD told Adam not to eat of that tree, He literally meant it. When GOD told Noah to build an Ark, He literally meant it. And when GOD told Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, He literally meant it.

Abraham did not get in trouble with GOD in any way for putting his son on the altar, or even for preparing to sacrifice his beloved child. Yes, GOD did not get angry with Abraham when He did those things because he was following orders and proving that he feared the LORD!¹⁶³

Truly, GOD gave many people other than Abraham some very clear instructions to do some extraordinary things! But people who allegorize the Scriptures would have claimed in such situations when GOD issued some extraordinary commands: He was really wanting the recipient to do something different than He commanded! And when someone begins to say things like that, they are actually “adding to” and “taking away from” GOD’s Word!

Plus, when they do this, they are not only denying the Word of GOD, they are also placing themselves in the position of “Pope” or “Guru” over others! And we can say this because: people cannot naturally, logically, and consistently arrive at the conclusion they are teaching, since the interpretations that they are peddling don’t match what the text literally says!

If someone was shipwrecked on a deserted island, and they had never heard anyone on earth teach about the Bible, but a Bible fell from the sky; would they ever *naturally* think that the 7 days of Genesis were not literal, 24-hour days with evenings and mornings? Well, we need to apply “*the deserted island test*” to every Biblical interpretation!

Thus, when you hear someone telling you that the plain sense reading of Scripture is not what GOD really meant, challenge them with “the deserted Island test”. And then you can also ask them: “Did GOD literally tell His prophet Hosea to marry a harlot?”

Or you could ask them: “Did GOD literally command Ezekiel to cook his food over human dung?” Absolutely, GOD commanded both of those things! And we know this because, Scripture records both of those commands, and we know that GOD *does not* instruct people to do things that He does not expect them to do!

¹⁶³ Genesis 22:1-2

Yes, when the Bible records: **“the LORD said to Hosea: “Go, take yourself a wife of harlotry and children of harlotry, for the land has committed great harlotry by departing from the LORD.”**¹⁶⁴, those who trust and obey the Bible don’t claim that GOD really meant that Hosea should buy a new horse, right? Of course not!

And in another place, GOD told Ezekiel: **“You shall eat it as barley cakes; and bake it using fuel of human waste in their sight.”** Then the LORD said, **“So shall the children of Israel eat their defiled bread among the Gentiles, where I will drive them.”**¹⁶⁵

But did you know that some people wrongly teach that GOD was tempting Ezekiel to sin when He commanded him to cook with human dung? Brethren, this is very dangerous thinking¹⁶⁶! And it is extremely dangerous because it can lead to people *deciding for themselves* which commandments of GOD they should obey and which commandments they should reject! But on the contrary, we must forever assume that the all-knowing GOD of the universe knows how to communicate! And when He speaks, we must obey!

As Paul wrote in Scripture: **Every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.**¹⁶⁷ And when GOD told Ezekiel to use human dung as fuel to cook his food, the phrase **“it is sanctified by the word of God”** would have most certainly applied!

But GOD also recognizes our weaknesses and lack of understanding. So, Scripture goes on to record Ezekiel saying: **“Ah, Lord GOD! Indeed I have never defiled myself from my youth till now; I have never eaten what died of itself or was torn by beasts, nor has abominable flesh ever come into my mouth.”** Then He said to me, **“See, I am giving you cow dung instead of human waste, and you shall prepare your bread over it.”**¹⁶⁸

Truly, GOD really meant for His prophet to cook his food over human dung, and Ezekiel would have been completely justified before GOD

¹⁶⁴ Hosea 1:2

¹⁶⁵ Ezekiel 4:12-13

¹⁶⁶ James 1:13

¹⁶⁷ 1 Timothy 4:4-5

¹⁶⁸ Ezekiel 4:14-15

if he would have followed those clear instructions. But because Ezekiel considered the idea unclean, GOD gave him a less offensive alternative after Ezekiel protested!

However, we must understand and confess that Ezekiel would have been doing a righteous thing if he would have obeyed the original command because it came from the mouth of the LORD!

Truly, if GOD tells us to do something and we obey, we are doing the right thing! **“All of His commandments are truth”**¹⁶⁹, and **“He is the judge of all flesh”**¹⁷⁰! So, the wise will forever hear GOD and obey Him! Thus, we see that these passages and many, many more affirm that GOD always says what He literally means, especially when He gives us a command! But what are some examples of passages in the Bible that are not exclusively literal?

Well Daniel records: **“I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea. “And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other. “The first was like a lion, and had eagle’s wings. I watched till its wings were plucked off; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man’s heart was given to it. “And suddenly another beast, a second, like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And they said thus to it: ‘Arise, devour much flesh!’ “After this I looked, and there was another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it. “After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns.”**¹⁷¹

But next, he also wrote: **“I, Daniel, was grieved in my spirit within my body, and the visions of my head troubled me. “I came near to one of those who stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of these things: ‘Those great beasts, which are four, are four kings which**

¹⁶⁹ Psalm 119:151

¹⁷⁰ Isaiah 66:16

¹⁷¹ Daniel 7:2-7

arise out of the earth. ‘But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.’”¹⁷²

So, here are some important facts to notice in this passage, facts that can be applied to all truly symbolic passages. First, *there was no literal interpretation of the vision that could apply before the solution was given to Daniel in verse 17*¹⁷³.

Second, the vision was not something that is commonly observable, because lions don’t ordinarily have eagles’ wings, bears aren’t normally lop-sided, leopards typically don’t have four heads (or the wings of a bird), and beasts usually don’t have iron teeth or ten horns!



And third, we must notice that the vision did not command Daniel to do anything! So, instead of being a “prescriptive” vision that contained instructions to the recipient, symbolic visions such as this one are “descriptive”; and they describe things that will typically take place in the future in a symbolic way.

Therefore, symbolic visions in the Bible are visions that cannot be understood logically and literally without a Biblically-supplied interpretational key that identifies what the items in the vision represent. And since the symbols cannot be understood literally

¹⁷² Daniel 7:15-18

¹⁷³ Daniel 7:17

without some additional interpretation, it is not considered “allegorizing” when Scripture itself explicitly defines the symbols.

However, we should also note that symbolic visions often unnaturally distort the features of the symbols in order to highlight some particular aspect of the item being symbolized. And even when a symbolic vision does not distort nature, it typically describes some oddly specific details about the symbols in the vision, and those details help us interpret the symbols.

And finally, Symbolic visions do not command the recipient to perform or abstain from any particular action. Instead, they describe something, most often about the future. So, the presence of an imperative command that directly relates to the objects in the vision indicates that the objects in the vision are not to be considered symbolic!

And with these principles firmly understood, we see: once the basic connection to reality was explained, Daniel could apply the concept of kingdoms to the vision. And with that interpretational key, then every item in the vision fit together perfectly, and every detail was included for a reason.



For example, the lion with an eagle’s wings represented a kingdom, and scholars agree that the first kingdom in Daniel’s vision was Babylon. Meanwhile, the Ishtar Gate constructed by Nebuchadnezzar

II, a king of Babylon, was adorned with lions with wings! So, a winged lion was a symbol of Babylon within their own culture.



Also, we should note that GOD never includes any meaningless details in the symbolic visions He gives to His prophets! Therefore, *every single detail* should eventually match up with reality, in some way or another.

Thus, now that we have reviewed what is known as a “symbolic vision” from the Bible, we saw that symbolic visions have some basic common characteristics. And, above all, we have proven: we can only claim that a passage is *symbolic* when there is no obvious literal interpretation available that adequately explains every detail of the vision! However, this fact may cause some to argue that a particular passage they want to interpret non-literally is a *parable* or a *metaphor* instead of a *symbolic vision*.

So, we must also understand the differences between these three types of passages. And a parable is an easy-to-understand narrative that uses common experiences to illustrate some less familiar truth.

While a metaphor is a comparison of two or more things that relies on figurative language designed to explain difficult ideas with simpler concepts.

Yes, we can recognize the Bible’s *parables*, or ‘*universally understandable stories that convey a complex truth in a way we can*

easily relate to' by examining the short stories JESUS was fond of telling, and later explaining to His disciples in private.

In one of those short stories that we commonly refer to as “the parable of the Wheat and the Tares”, JESUS described a man with a field of wheat and tares growing together, and the owner of the field waiting until the time of the harvest to separate the two. Then JESUS added that the wheat was gathered by the workers into the barn, but the tares were burned in the fire.¹⁷⁴

Then, after reading about JESUS relaying this common, everyday scenario that we can all easily relate to (in contrast to the dreamlike strangeness of a symbolic vision) we read: **Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field.” He answered and said to them: “He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. “The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. “The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. “Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. “The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, “and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. “Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”**¹⁷⁵

So, just as we saw in the strange and unnatural symbolic passage, each item contained in the everyday-relatable parable had a role in the explanation. And none of the words that JESUS used were given in vain. Therefore, the main difference between a parable and a symbolic vision is: a parable uses everyday, relatable stories to help us see some spiritual truth, while a symbolic vision uses very uncommon imagery like lions with wings or four-headed leopards! And that is why symbolic visions typically cause great confusion to the recipient until the interpretation is revealed.

Also, while symbolic passages don't include overt imperative commands, in the passages we call parables or metaphors, there

¹⁷⁴ Matthew 13:24-30

¹⁷⁵ Matthew 13:36-43

sometimes are commands included. However, they are much easier to understand and apply. Also, by the way, we can often recognize metaphorical passages by the usage of the words: “like” or “as”.

For example, JESUS said: **“You yourselves, be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately. “Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them.”**¹⁷⁶

By using the word: “like”, JESUS made a metaphorical comparison between a servant waiting for his master and His disciples waiting for His return. Also, the larger context of the passage clearly mentioned His return that He said would happen on a day and an hour we will not expect! ¹⁷⁷

So, the command to be ready and watching¹⁷⁸ simply means that we should be obeying what JESUS taught and doing His will as His faithful servants as we await His return! And in this way, we will not be ashamed during His coming.

You see, the parables and metaphors of the Bible are not very hard to understand, but Symbolic passages are a little more mysterious. In fact, they cannot be understood until we discover what each symbolic item represents!

However, in all of these types of passages, we are never free to arrive at our own interpretation without clearly related passages of the Bible to back up our interpretation, and explain every little detail!

That is why Peter said: **“... no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”**¹⁷⁹

And, with all of this in mind, when GOD told Jeremiah to wear a yoke, and when He told Joshua to conquer the Promised Land, and when

¹⁷⁶ Luke 12:36-37

¹⁷⁷ Luke 12:40

¹⁷⁸ Luke 12: 37-40

¹⁷⁹ 2 Peter 1:20-21

He told Paul to remain in Corinth, they obeyed what GOD commanded! So, why would a vision given to Peter about food be any different?

Peter himself tells us that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, so we must not dare to go beyond what is written, and what GOD literally said! In fact, when we do, we place ourselves above Scripture and we call GOD a liar!

Ask yourself, if Peter would have obeyed the command to “**rise, kill, and eat**”¹⁸⁰, could GOD have judged him for obeying His voice? Absolutely not! Then GOD would have contradicted Himself while supposedly tempting Peter to sin!

But James states very plainly: **Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.**”¹⁸¹

Also, let’s be clear: Peter actually did interpret the vision he was given very literally when he replied: “**Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean.**”¹⁸² Thus, even though Peter was slow to accept all that the vision commanded, he understood from the very beginning: the vision was about eating and food!

But some wrongly claim that GOD didn’t really mean what He commanded Peter 3 times to do! And they *allegorize* the LORD’s words, and claim: “*It was only a symbolic vision about the Gentiles, and not about food at all!*” And they even claim that Peter was the one who said the vision was not about food!

Meanwhile, the fact is that Peter never said that! Not once in the Bible, not even in Acts 10:28, did Peter claim: “*The vision had nothing to do with food!*” No that is something certain people are imposing on the text!

You see, Peter never mentioned the vision in any way when He said: “**You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean. Therefore I came**

¹⁸⁰ Acts 10:11-13

¹⁸¹ James 1:13

¹⁸² Acts 10:14

without objection as soon as I was sent for. I ask, then, for what reason have you sent for me?”¹⁸³

Does anyone see an explicit reference to the vision in that passage? No! So, if this passage contained the supposed interpretation of the vision, wouldn't have Peter mentioned the vision in these verses, or repeated this supposed interpretation of the vision later in Scripture?

After all, Peter was there when JESUS said: **“The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels.”¹⁸⁴** Peter knew Scripture has to define the interpretation clearly because “no prophecy is of a private interpretation”!

So, where is the passage of the Bible where Peter says: “The sheet is the world, the animals are the Gentiles”, and “rise, kill, and eat” means: “go, preach, and baptize”? Such as passage does not exist, because Peter knew the vision was about food!

How do we know that when Peter said **“God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean”¹⁸⁵** that Peter wasn't referring to the HOLY SPIRIT telling Him to go with the men Cornelius sent?¹⁸⁶ How do we know that Peter wasn't referring to JESUS teaching Him that nothing that enters the mouth of a man can defile him?¹⁸⁷ We certainly can't eliminate those possibilities by anything Peter said in Acts 10:28!

Brothers and Sisters, it is not adequate to claim that Peter's first statement to Cornelius fully explains away the vision! No! The lack of a reference to the vision in Acts 10:28, the context of chapters 10, 11, 15, and 21 of Acts, and the facts we have already discussed regarding every real symbolic vision in the Bible destroy all attempts to *allegorize GOD's command to rise, kill, and eat of the animals in the sheet!*

Truly, Peter never again repeats the Acts 10:28 statement, even in several places where it would have directly applied! For example,

¹⁸³ Acts 10:27-29

¹⁸⁴ Matthew 13:36-43

¹⁸⁵ Acts 10:28

¹⁸⁶ Acts 10:19-20

¹⁸⁷ Mark 7:14-15

Peter did not reduce the vision to a statement about the Gentiles, even in the midst of a raging debate regarding the issue of Gentile compliance with laws concerning things like circumcision and food! Instead, Peter actually replied to those who said: **“It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses”**¹⁸⁸, with a statement that was perfectly consistent with the vision he received being about food!

Peter

“It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.” Acts 15:5

The Pharisees

“Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they.”
Acts 15:7-11

He replied: **“Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they.”**¹⁸⁹

In a debate that ended with instructions about foods and certain physical activities that can spiritually defile the Gentile converts, and in a debate that began with certain Pharisees arguing: **“It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the**

¹⁸⁸ Acts 15:5

¹⁸⁹ Acts 15:7-11

law of Moses”, Peter took his stand on the side that only someone who saw the vision as literally regarding foods would choose! ¹⁹⁰

But those who wrongly allegorize the vision GOD gave Peter, end up on the defeated Pharisaical side of the debate! The side that was rebuked by every single one of our LORD’s Apostles in a letter! And please notice that Peter himself characterized that Pharisaical position as **“testing GOD”**, and **“putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples”**!¹⁹¹

Also, please understand: the issue they were debating in Acts chapter 15 was not what the Bible specifically calls: “The traditions of the elders”¹⁹² which included things like ritual handwashing. No, according to the Holy Bible, the issue they were debating was: mandatory “circumcision” and mandatory adherence to certain aspects of “the law of Moses” for the Gentiles!¹⁹³

Thus, in that debate, Peter revealed how we must understand the vision he was given when he completely agreed with Paul, Barnabas, James, and the Jerusalem elders, by rebuking the Pharisees.

And our understanding of the vision must harmonize with the letter they all issued, which stated: The Gentiles should not be troubled with physical requirements for holiness beyond the four clear forms of spiritual defilement that Moses recorded even Gentiles were to avoid.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹⁰ Acts 15:1-29

¹⁹¹ Acts 15:7-11

¹⁹² Matthew 15:2, Mark 7:3-5

¹⁹³ Acts 15:1, 5, 24

¹⁹⁴ Acts 15:23-29

The Apostles

“It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.” Acts 15:5

The Pharisees

The apostles, the elders, and the brethren, To the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia: Greetings. Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, “You must be circumcised and keep the law”—to whom we gave no such commandment—it seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men to ...who will also report the same things by word of mouth. For **it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well.** Farewell.
Acts 15:23-29

Now, about those four very specific requirements laid out for the Gentile converts in the letter: Moses records that the Gentile we know as “Noah” was told he could eat **“every living thing that moves”** in Genesis 9, but he was also told not to consume blood¹⁹⁵! And that is the reason behind two of the four commands; namely not eating animals that were strangled and not consuming blood.

Plus, Moses also recorded that the Gentile cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed because of their sexual immorality, therefore even Gentiles need to avoid such defilement.¹⁹⁶

And finally, in Deuteronomy 18:12, Moses recorded that the Gentile nations of Canaan were destroyed for their idolatry.

Therefore, simply by reading the writings of Moses, every student of the Bible can see: the four physical things mentioned in the Jerusalem Letter can spiritually defile anyone, including a Gentile. So, the Gentiles had to avoid these four forms of spiritual defilement very carefully.

Consequently, this is why James justified his conclusion that even the Gentiles must abstain from these four necessary and specific things by referring to Moses being taught “from ancient times”! Truly, everyone who reads the books Moses wrote should be able to see

¹⁹⁵ Genesis 9:3-4

¹⁹⁶ Genesis 19:4-5, Jude 1:7

that even Gentiles get judged for violating these four items of “defilement”.¹⁹⁷

And this is why verse 21 of Acts chapter 15 begins with the word “for” or “because”!!! Verse 21 was the explanation of why these four items were necessary for the Gentiles to observe, and it specifically referred to Moses being preached in the past, not the future!

“THEREFORE I JUDGE THAT WE SHOULD NOT TROUBLE THOSE FROM AMONG THE GENTILES WHO ARE TURNING TO GOD, “BUT THAT WE WRITE TO THEM TO ABSTAIN FROM THINGS POLLUTED BY IDOLS, FROM SEXUAL IMMORALITY, FROM THINGS STRANGLED, AND FROM BLOOD. “FOR [BECAUSE] MOSES HAS HAD [PAST TENSE] THROUGHOUT MANY GENERATIONS THOSE WHO PREACH HIM IN EVERY CITY, BEING READ IN THE SYNAGOGUES EVERY SABBATH.” ACTS 15:19-21

So, despite the pharisaical claims of the comprehensive continuance teachers, verse 21 was definitely not an addendum to the Jerusalem letter that somehow mandated the Gentile converts must eventually listen to “the circumcision party” that James was directly disagreeing with! No, this is why the wording of verse 21 was not included anywhere in the Jerusalem Letter!

Truly, the whole council *finally and openly rebuked* those who were adding to these four physical requirements for the Gentile converts by saying: **“We have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, “You must be circumcised and keep the law”—to whom we gave no such commandment”**¹⁹⁸

And we see this understanding of Acts chapter 15 confirmed several years later in Acts chapter 21, when James and the elders of

¹⁹⁷ Acts 15:21

¹⁹⁸ Acts 15:23-26

Jerusalem explain: “**You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law; but they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs. What then? The assembly must certainly meet, for they will hear that you have come. Therefore do what we tell you: We have four men who have taken a vow. Take them and be purified with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads, and that all may know that those things of which they were informed concerning you are nothing, but that you yourself also walk orderly and keep the law. But concerning the Gentiles who believe, we have written and decided that they should observe no such thing, except that they should keep themselves from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality.”¹⁹⁹**

Clearly, the first-century church decided once and for all that the Gentiles should not be forced to observe circumcision or to walk according to the customs of ritual purification! But, at the same time, they clearly stated that the Gentile converts *did* need to avoid the four forms of spiritual defilement that had led to GOD’s judgment on Gentile nations in the past. And this is the only *harmonious* interpretation of *all* that is written on this subject; therefore, it is the correct interpretation.

Truly, the only connection between Peter’s vision and the Gentiles was: the fact that the Jews refused to “**go to or eat with one from another nation**”²⁰⁰ because Leviticus 11 declared that the Gentiles were unclean because their food was unclean!²⁰¹

But GOD demolished that barrier between the Jews and the Gentiles with the vision He gave to Peter! And the LORD took away any reasons Peter once had to avoid preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles! So, that is why Peter stayed with Cornelius and ate with his household, plus that is why Peter was accused when he returned to Jerusalem!²⁰²

¹⁹⁹ Acts 21:20-25

²⁰⁰ Acts 10:28

²⁰¹ Leviticus 11:24-25

²⁰² Acts 11:2-3

AND WHEN PETER CAME UP TO JERUSALEM,
THOSE OF THE CIRCUMCISION CONTENDED
WITH HIM, SAYING, “YOU WENT IN TO
UNCIRCUMCISED MEN AND ATE WITH THEM!”

ACTS 11:2-3

So, when Peter explained his actions to his accusers, he gave us the real summary of His vision that we must all rely on to properly understand everything Peter learned in Acts chapter 10. And, while never mentioning anything even remotely similar to the words of Acts 10:28, Peter did mention the entire vision, the pouring out of the HOLY SPIRIT on the Gentiles, and the reasons why he later ate with the Gentiles!²⁰³

Or, in other words, Peter explained his eating with the Gentiles by speaking about the vision that was obviously about food, along with the fact that GOD no longer treated the Gentiles as unclean due to their food, so the Jews shouldn't either!

Therefore, GOD obviously accomplished two things through Peter's vision! First, the LORD declared that He had “made clean” the foods that Peter was still calling “common and unclean.

And second: by making those foods clean, the Gentiles were no longer to be considered unclean because of what they ate!

Only in this way can everything we read in the Apostolic Scriptures be literally understood and harmonized! And if we make Scripture itself our final absolute authority in all matters of faith and practice, we will never allegorize a single verse of the Bible to hold on to our own understanding of things! Instead, we must submit to the literal

²⁰³ Acts 11:5-17

meaning of every passage, and harmonize all of Scripture together as it has been progressively revealed.

And, in this way, we need to harmonize our interpretation of Peter's vision with the words of Paul, who wrote: "I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself."²⁰⁴

We need to harmonize our interpretation of Peter's vision with the words of the Bible that declare: **Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.**²⁰⁵

We need to harmonize our interpretation of Peter's vision with the principle that states: **Food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse.**²⁰⁶

We need to harmonize our interpretation of Peter's vision with the command that exhorts: **Do not let anyone judge you in eating, or in drinking, or in part of a feast, or of a new moon, or of sabbaths, which are a shadow of coming things, but the body is of Christ.**²⁰⁷

And we need to understand, as we interpret Peter's vision: **...the way into the Holiest of all was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing. It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience— concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation.**²⁰⁸

²⁰⁴ Romans 14:14

²⁰⁵ 1 Timothy 4:1-5

²⁰⁶ 1 Corinthians 8:8

²⁰⁷ Colossians 2:16-17

²⁰⁸ Hebrews 9:8-10

Sadly, those who have allegorized Peter's vision tend to object to all of these verses. And they try to explain them away because they seem to contradict Leviticus chapter 11! And the truth is, Peter's vision and all of the verses we just reviewed do seem to contradict Leviticus chapter 11.

But we must not ignore the undeniable fact that Leviticus 11 seems to contradict Genesis 9:3 and Genesis 1:30! You see, despite the false teachings that many of our Brothers and Sisters have heard on the internet, the Bible has never monolithically taught one specific diet to all human beings!

The Bible has never monolithically taught one specific diet to all human beings!

1. And God said, "See, I have given you **every herb that yields seed** which is on the face of all the earth, **and every tree whose fruit yields seed**; to you it shall be for food. "Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life, I have given every green herb for food" Genesis 1:29-30
2. "**Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you.** I have given you all things, even as the green herbs. But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood." Genesis 9:3-4
3. "Among the animals, **whatever divides the hoof, having cloven hooves and chewing the cud—that you may eat.**" Leviticus 11:3
"**These you may eat of all that are in the water: whatever in the water has fins and scales,** whether in the seas or in the rivers—that you may eat." Leviticus 11:9
4. In it were **all kinds** of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. And a voice came to him, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat." But Peter said, "Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean." And a voice spoke to him again the second time, "What God has cleansed you must not call common." Acts 10:12-15
For **every creature** of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. 1 Timothy 4:4-5

No, GOD himself told Noah: "Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs."²⁰⁹ And we proved several weeks ago that the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts of this text show plainly that Noah was able to eat of all of the animals!

²⁰⁹ Genesis 9:3

JEWISH PRACTICE	LEARNING & VALUES	COMMUNITY & FAMILY	INSPIRATION & ENTERTAINMENT
<p>to guard him from mice, but if Og, the king of Bashan is dead, he must be guarded from mice, as it is said: "And your fear and your life shall be." When will your fear be upon the creatures? As long as you are alive.</p>		<p>מת, צריך לשומרו מן העכברים, שנאמר ומוראכם ותחתם יהיה, אימתי יהיה מוראכם על החיות, כל זמן שאתם חיים:</p>	
<p>3 Every moving thing that lives shall be yours to eat; like the green vegetation, I have given you everything.</p>		<p>ג כָּל־רֶמֶשׂ אֲשֶׁר הוּא־חַי לָכֶם יְהִי לְאֹכְלָהּ כִּי־רַק לֶעֱשׂב נָתַתִּי לָכֶם אֶת־כָּל:</p>	
<p>shall be yours to eat: (Sanhedrin 59b) For I did not permit the first man [Adam] to eat meat, but only vegetation, but for you, just as the green vegetation which I permitted for the first man, I have given you everything.</p>		<p>לכם יהיה לאכלה: שלא הרשיתי לאדם הראשון לאכול בשר אלא ירק עשב, ולכם כירק עשב שהפקרתי לאדם הראשון, נתתי לכם את כל:</p>	
<p>4 But, flesh with its soul, its blood, you shall not eat.</p>		<p>ד אֲדָבָשָׁר בְּנַפְשׁוֹ דָּמוֹ לֹא תֹאכְלוּ:</p>	
<p>flesh with its soul: He prohibited them [to eat] a limb [cut off from] a living creature; i.e., as long as its soul is in it, you shall not eat the flesh. — [from Sanh. ad loc.] [i.e., if the limb is cut from the animal while it is alive, it is forbidden to be eaten even after the animal expires.]</p>		<p>בשר בנפשו: אסר להם אבר מן החי, כלומר כל זמן שנפשו בו לא תאכלו הבשר:</p>	

In fact, we saw that Hebrew scholars have universally taught for thousands of years that Noah could eat of all of the animal kinds! So, there really is no debate based solely on the language of the Bible regarding the issue of Noah's omnivorous diet compared to the Leviticus 11 diet.

ISRAEL BIBLE WEEKLY
מכון התנ"ך בישראל

It may be surprising, but God told Noah to eat *קֹל־רֶמֶשׂ אֲשֶׁר הוּא־חַי* (*kol remes asher hu chay*) "all living things that creep/crawl." **This is a broad-sweeping description that implies the totality of animal life.** Indeed, *רָמַשׂ* (*ramas*) means "to crawl" or "creep"; in other words, "to move close to the ground" – thus, *רֶמֶשׂ* (*remes*) can be translated as "reptile" or even "insect." **For Noah, not only insects and reptiles, but all species—including those that the Torah would later deem unclean—were now on the menu.**

Noah is the only man called *יִשְׁשׁוּבֵיטְדִיק תָּמִים* (*yish tzadik tamim*) "righteous"

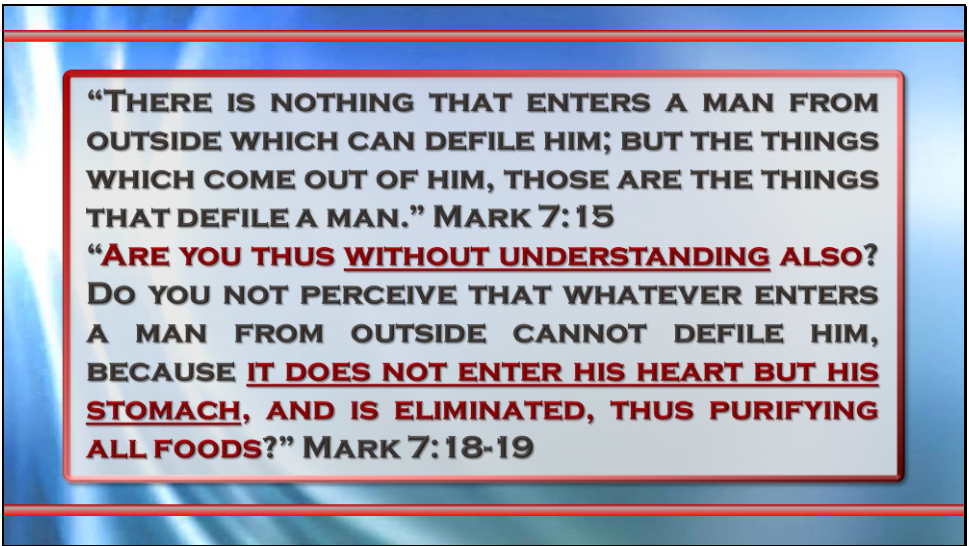
And, while we can all agree that *Leviticus chapter 11 does label "unclean" certain foods that are lower on the food chain*, in the New Covenant (especially after Acts chapter 10) the Leviticus 11 diet must never be treated as a matter of justification, sanctification, holiness, cleanness, purity, obedience, or mandatory obligation!

JESUS clearly explained, “**There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man.**” And He added: “**Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him, because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, thus purifying all foods?**”²¹⁰

Please think about how sweeping a statement JESUS has made, and remember as you ponder this that “**he who does not abide in the doctrine of Christ, does not have God**”!²¹¹

Do you believe that any food that enters a man from outside, and enters his belly can defile a man? This passage is not just about bread or eating with unwashed hands! JESUS your King said “**NOTHING** that enters a man from outside”, and “**WHATEVER** enters a man from outside”. So even if “unclean” food enters a person, it *does not* make the person unclean! And once it passes into the waste bowl, it is eliminated, and purged from the person.

Now some would claim that this contradicts Leviticus 11, and JESUS indicates that this interpretation is put forward by people who are: “*without understanding*”!



²¹⁰ Mark 7:18-19

²¹¹ 2 John 1:9

In Leviticus, if you came in contact with an unclean animal, you simply had to wash and be unclean until evening.²¹² And by evening, the Levitically unclean food would have passed from your body²¹³, rendering you Levitically “clean”, so you could re-enter the camp where GOD’s Tabernacle was set up.

Meanwhile, there is not one single case of punishment ever recorded in Scripture for simply eating Levitically unclean food! And there is not one prescribed punishment for doing so, beyond a ritual washing and a period of uncleanness!

Now, for those who are thinking Isaiah 66:17 contradicts what I just stated, please look at Isaiah chapter 65 from verse 3 to verse 5 to learn that both chapters are speaking about Idolatrous practices that have always carried the death penalty!

Isaiah 65:3-7 & 66:17

- 1. A people who provoke Me to anger continually to My face; who sacrifice in gardens, and **burn incense on altars of brick**; who **sit among the graves**, and **spend the night in the tombs**; who **eat swine’s flesh**, and the **broth of abominable things is in their vessels**; who **say, ‘Keep to yourself, Do not come near me, for I am holier than you!’** These are smoke in My nostrils, A fire that burns all the day. **Isaiah 65:3-5****
- 2. “Those who sanctify themselves and purify themselves, to go to the gardens after an idol in the midst, eating swine’s flesh and the abomination and the mouse, shall be consumed together,” says the LORD. “Isaiah 66:17**

And with that fact understood, I hope we can all now agree: that allegorizing a passage that can be easily interpreted in a literal way puts you in charge of the Bible instead of the Bible in charge of you!

²¹² Leviticus 11:24-25

²¹³ Mark 7:19

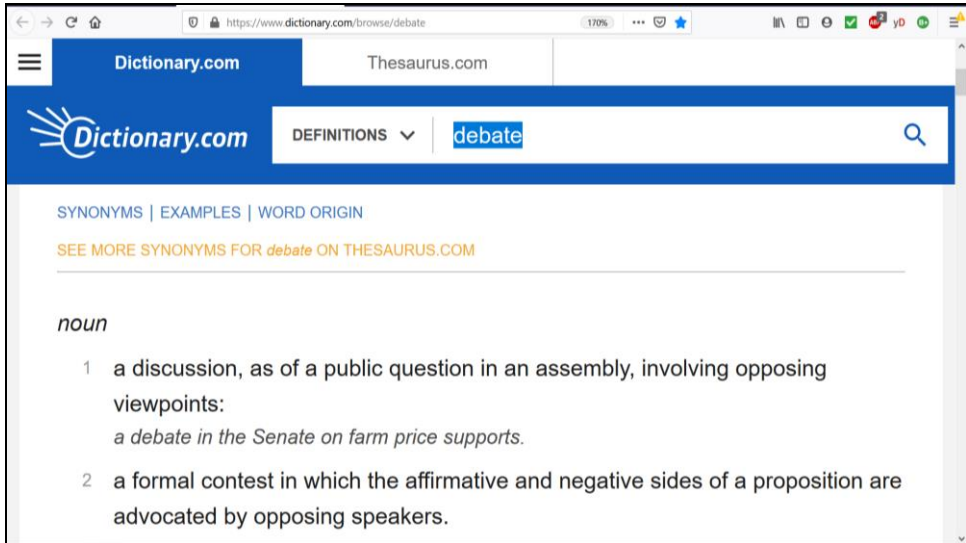
And I hope that we can all now answer the question: “If GOD tells you clearly to do something, 3 times, are you going to allegorize His direct command?”, with a resounding: “No!”

While it is true that our GOD never changes, *the food laws have changed several times in the Bible*; from a vegetarian diet to an omnivore diet, to the Levitical diet, and back to the omnivore diet.

And along with *those* changes, the priesthood changed, the sacrifices changed, the Tabernacle changed, and we now have a New and Living Way to approach the throne of Grace that does not rely on the blood of bulls and goats; or foods, drinks, various washings, or fleshly ordinances. And this is what the Scriptures themselves teach when look to all of the Bible and the Bible alone.

Chapter 6: The Great Debate

Dictionary dot com defines a **debate** as: “**a discussion, as of a public question in an assembly, involving opposing viewpoints**”. And, while the Bible records several different debates, one particular debate clearly towers above them all.



In fact, only *one* single debate found within the pages of the Bible was considered important enough to call all of the Apostles and Elders together into one place to decide the outcome. And that same debate was so important to the LORD, that His voice preemptively spoke from heaven to settle the issue once and for all.

We have spent several weeks attempting to correctly frame this particular debate while trying to eliminate some of the modern pharisaical deceptions that surround it. Also, we have discussed the Biblical principles required to understand why such a debate came about and how it must be resolved; but now it is time that we finally examine Luke’s account of the Apostolic solution to the Continuity/Discontinuity Debate.

By the end of Acts chapter 14, Paul and Barnabas had completed their first missionary journey that brought a large number of Gentiles to the faith. And they were spending a long period of time with the church in Antioch, the third largest city in the Roman Empire. But while they

were staying in the city where the disciples were first called “Christians”, the continuity debate began; sometime around 49 A.D., approximately 15 years after Paul’s conversion on the road to Damascus.

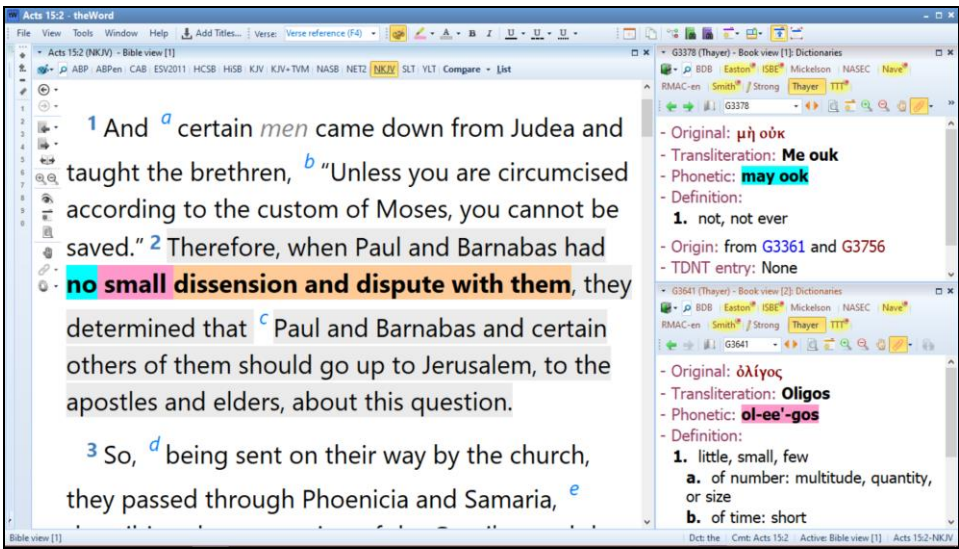
The screenshot shows a website titled "TIMELINE OF APOSTLE PAUL'S LIFE" with the subtitle "Timeline information courtesy of Bible Lector Bible". The page features a table with columns for "Date", "Event", and "Scripture Reference". The events are listed chronologically from 49 AD to 67 AD. Key events include Paul's conversion, his journey to Antioch, his partnership with Barnabas, his travels to Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe, his return to Antioch, his journey to Jerusalem, and his final journey to Rome and his death in Nero's Circus.

Date	Event	Scripture Reference
49 AD	Paul and Silas brought from strongholds (Acts 15:40)	Acts 15:40
50 AD	Paul and Silas brought from strongholds (Acts 15:40)	Acts 15:40
51 AD	Paul and Silas brought from strongholds (Acts 15:40)	Acts 15:40
52 AD	Paul and Silas brought from strongholds (Acts 15:40)	Acts 15:40
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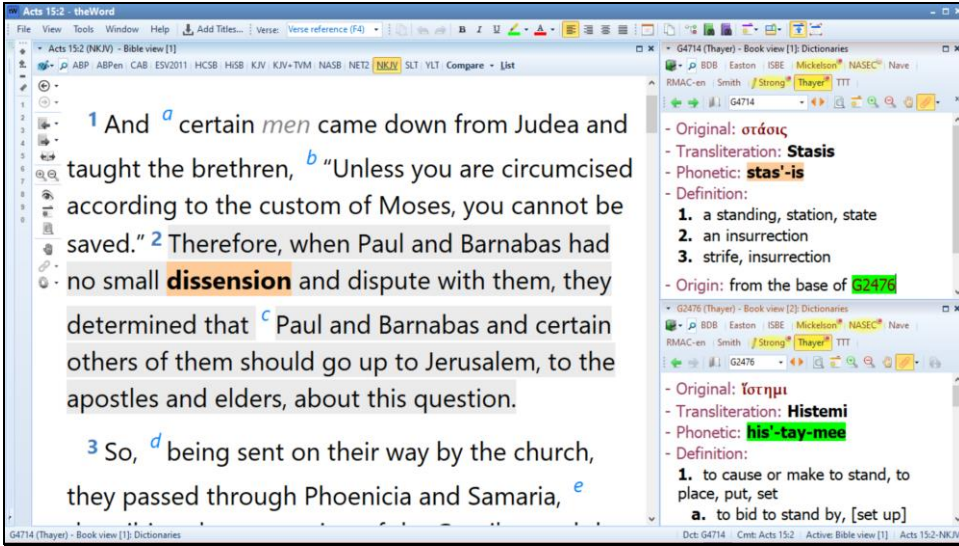
About this debate that began in the church in Antioch (an ancient Greek city near the modern city of the same name in the country currently known as Turkey), Luke records: **Certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.”** Therefore, when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders, about this question.²¹⁴

When Luke wrote: **“Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them”**, he was indicating that they actually had the opposite of a small dissension, dispute, or debate with those who said: **“Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved”!** In fact, they had a very large debate with those who said such things!

²¹⁴ Acts 15:1-2

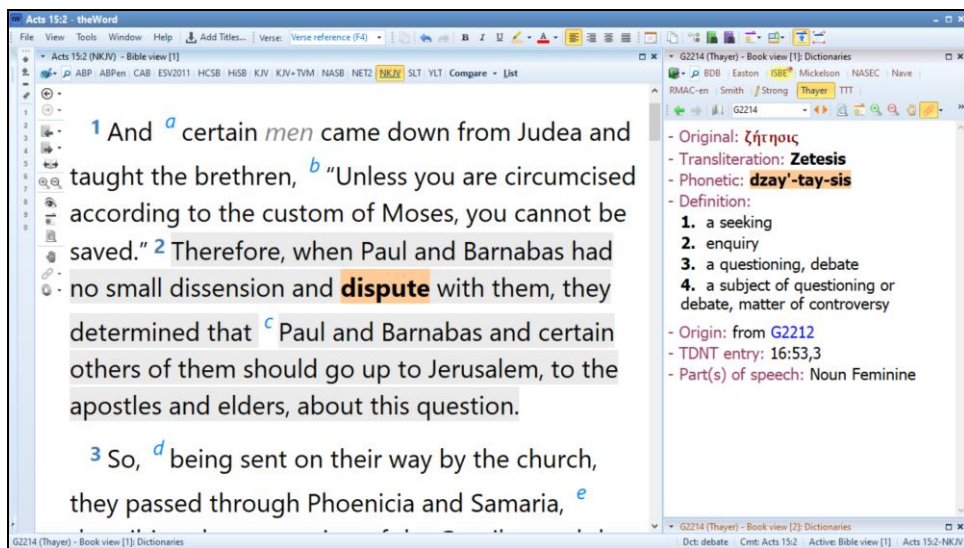


Also, the Greek noun translated here as “**dissension**” is: “**stas'-is**”, but it comes from the Greek verb: “**his'-tay-mee**”, which means: “**to cause (or make) to stand**”. So, when the noun “**stas'-is**” is used in a situation with two or more opposing positions, it refers to a faction, an insurrection, or even strife.



In fact, based on the verb “**his'-tay-mee**” that the noun “**stas'-is**” developed from, we can picture Paul and Barnabas literally standing up to strongly disagree with those who were teaching: “**Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.**”

Plus, along with the idea of them literally standing up to resist that claim, the second word that Luke used, which was translated here as “dispute”, was: **“dzay'-tay-sis”**. And this noun indicates: **“a subject of questioning or debate, or a matter of controversy”**.



So, **“a large, contentious debate”** arose in Antioch between Paul and Barnabas and certain men from Judea over the question: *“Was circumcision according to the custom of Moses mandatory for salvation”*. But, when the debate could not be fully settled between them in Antioch, they agreed to take the question to the Apostles and Elders in Jerusalem, to settle the debate once and for all.

Therefore, Luke recorded: **So, being sent on their way by the church, they passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, describing the conversion of the Gentiles; and they caused great joy to all the brethren. And when they had come to Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders; and they reported all things that God had done with them. But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up, saying, “It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.”**²¹⁵

So, at this point in the debate, we know that Paul and Barnabas were on one side arguing that *circumcision was not a mandatory*

²¹⁵ Acts 15:3-5

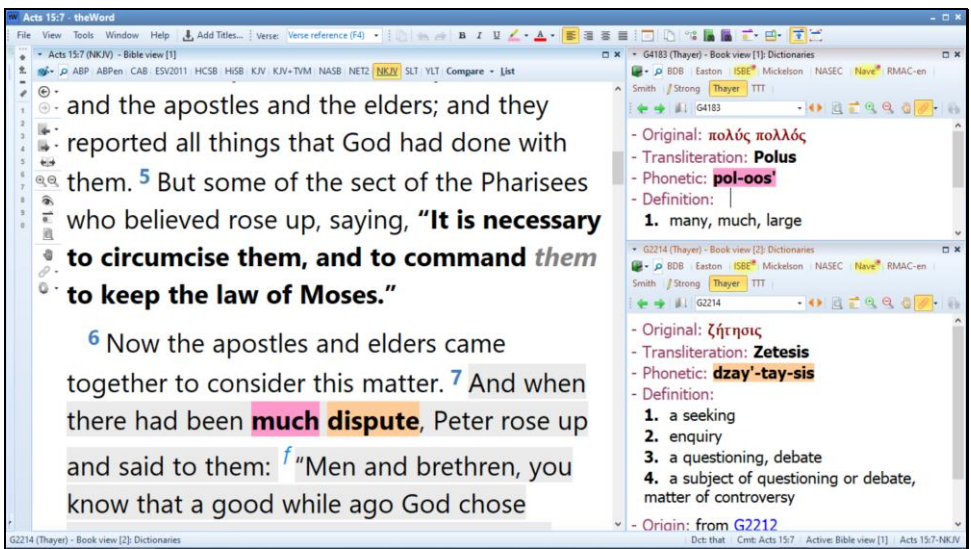
requirement for the Gentile converts, but on the other side of the debate, certain men from Judea (including certain believing Pharisees) insisted: *circumcision and keeping all of the law of Moses was necessary*.

Also, at this point in the debate, Paul and Barnabas were *outnumbered* by those who insisted the Gentiles had to be circumcised and observant of all of the laws of Moses. So, that was the historical setting behind the moment that Luke described by writing: **Now the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter.**

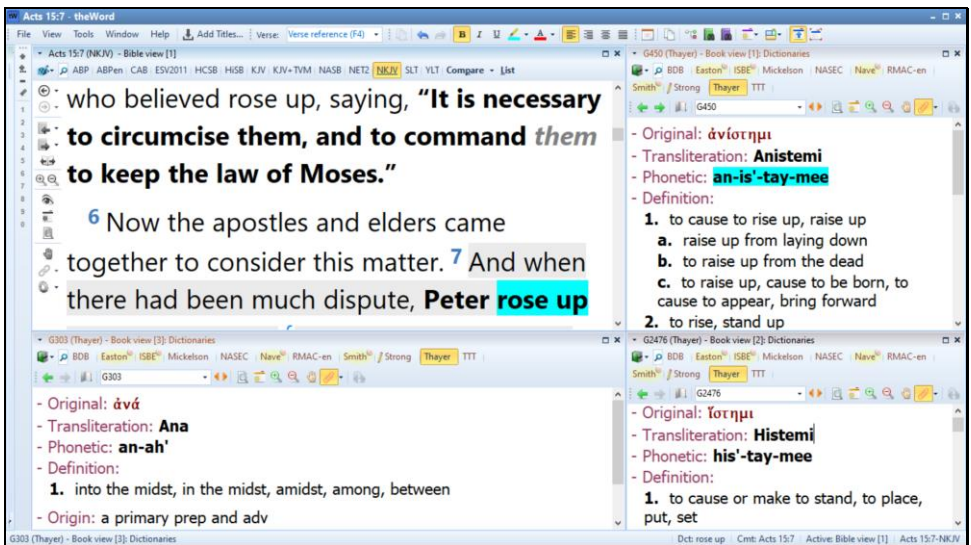
Based on the way Luke recorded this passage, it is clear that the Apostles, the Elders, and the Jerusalem church received Paul and Barnabas (along with those who started the debate in Antioch) to welcome them to Jerusalem. However, after certain Pharisees “**rose up**” and reinforced *the mandatory physical circumcision side of the debate*, the Apostles and Elders then met together in a smaller group (*without the full congregation*) to consider the question.

Thus, about that continued meeting, which would have included the 12 Apostles (whose names will be listed on the foundations of the New Jerusalem) as well as the highly respected Elders of the Jerusalem church (such as the authors of the books modern Bibles call: “James” and “Jude”), Luke recounts: “**And when there had been much dispute, Peter rose up...**”

Up to this point in time (circa 49 A.D.) the question: “*What components of the Mosaic Covenant were no longer mandatory in the New MESSIANIC Covenant?*” had not been fully considered. So, Luke tells us that there was: “**pol-oos' dzay'-tay-sis**”, meaning: “**much debate**”, or “**large amounts of controversy**”.



But then, Luke explained that Peter “stood up”, by using the word: “an-is'-tay-mee”, which literally means “to stand up in the midst of”. So, we can picture Paul and Barnabas debating with several men who insisted on mandatory circumcision and adherence to all of the laws of Moses; but after there had been large amounts of debating, Peter stood up in the middle of them all, and began speaking.



Then Luke records that Peter said: “Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them

the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they.”²¹⁶

Peter is clearly referencing Acts chapter 10 here, and the salvation of the household of Cornelius. And Peter’s main point was: ***the Gentiles received the HOLY SPIRIT by believing the word of the Gospel, not through the works of the law, such as circumcision or clean eating.***

Now someone may ask: ***“Why are you connecting circumcision to Levitically ‘clean eating’ when discussing this debate?”*** And the answer to that question is: ***“Because the Bible connects those two things in multiple places”!***

First, everyone who knows it is wrong to allegorize Scripture and accuse GOD of tempting people to sin understands: *Peter was specifically given a heavenly vision about eating certain animals as food to prepare him to preach the Gospel to uncircumcised Gentiles!*

Second, after Peter stayed with Cornelius and those of his household that received the HOLY SPIRIT in Acts chapter 10, certain men from the circumcision contended with him in Acts chapter 11, by saying: ***“You went in to uncircumcised men and ate with them!”***²¹⁷

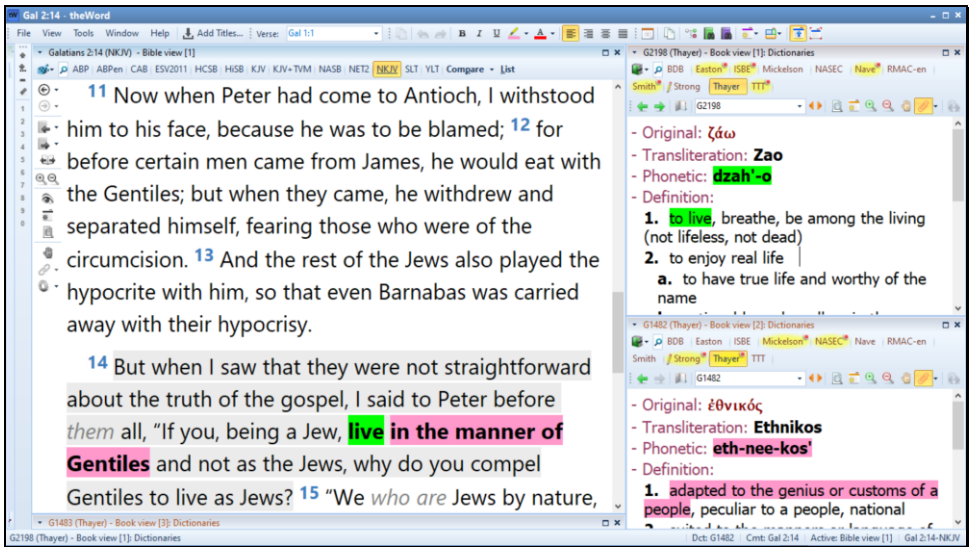
Third, eating with uncircumcised men was the central theme in Paul’s account that records: ***Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy. But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, “If you, being a Jew, live in the***

²¹⁶ Acts 15:7-11

²¹⁷ Acts 11:3

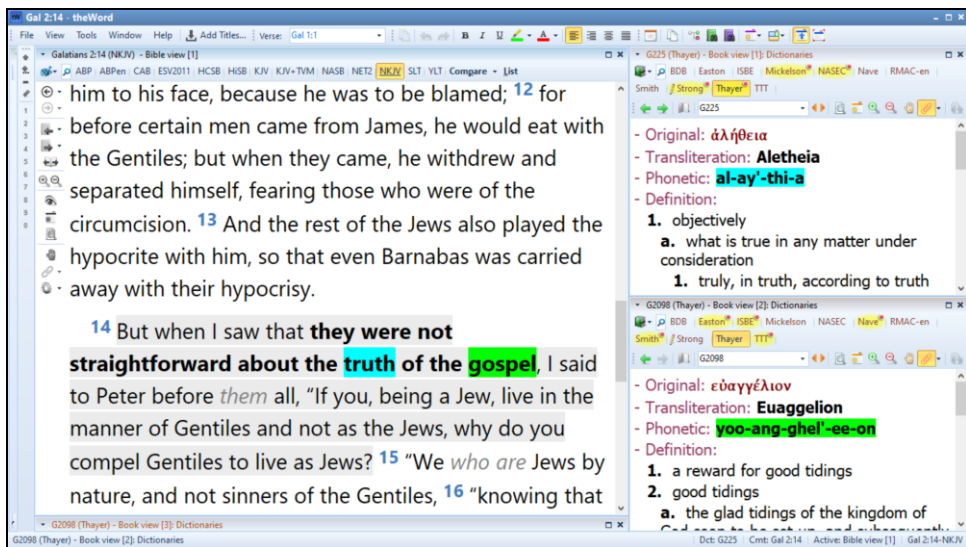
manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?²¹⁸

Paul was very clear: simply because Peter feared the men Paul called “**the circumcision**”, he stopped **eating** with the Gentiles in Antioch when those men were visiting! And Paul called that conduct: “**hypocrisy**” because: Peter was *acting* or *pretending* that he did not “**live in the manner of Gentiles**” in regards to food, only when those of “**the Circumcision**” came from Jerusalem.



Meanwhile, we must note and forever remember that, in this passage, Paul considered Peter’s actions regarding not “**eating with the Gentiles**” a deviation from the Gospel itself! So, the closely connected debates recorded in Acts 11, Acts 15, and Galatians chapter 2 are centered around a Gospel issue, according to Scripture. And this is very important to everyone who truly understands the New Covenant!

²¹⁸ Galatians 2:11-14



But now, we must add one more very important passage that connects the debate in Acts chapter 15 to food, and that passage is, of course, Acts 15 itself! You see, when the Apostles and Elders made their final, perpetually authoritative conclusion (in the letter they sent out to the Gentile converts)²¹⁹ ***three of the four restricted items are related to food!***

So, to deny that the debate in Acts chapter 15 was about circumcision and food would be to deny the very words of Acts chapter 15 that Luke recorded! Plus, to do so, a person would have to ignore Acts 10, Acts 11, and Galatians chapter 2 as well!

Now, with those Biblical facts understood, earlier we established that Peter's main point in Acts chapter 15 was: ***"The Gentiles received the HOLY SPIRIT by believing the word of the Gospel, not through the works of the law, such as circumcision or clean eating"***.

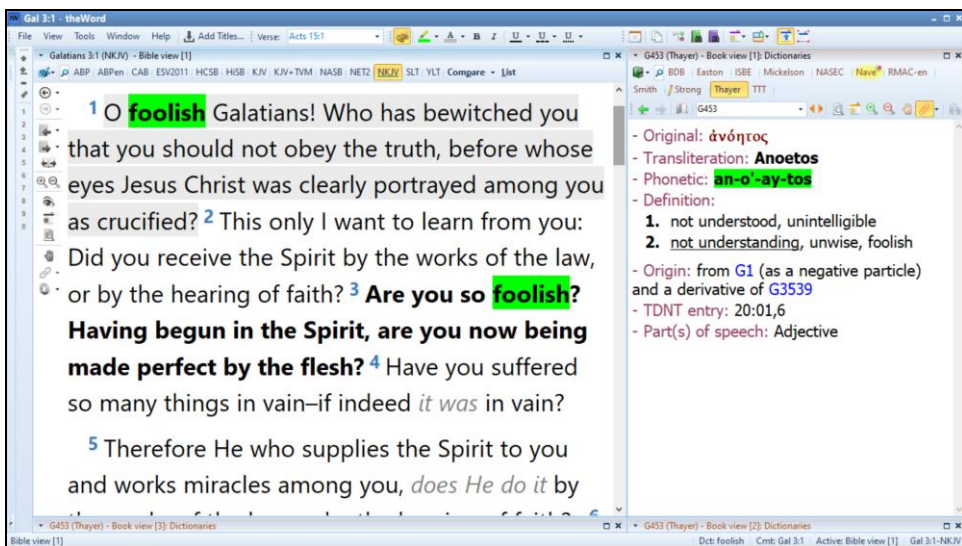
We *must* understand and embrace this concept because Paul repeated this logical argument that Peter once used when he wrote to the Galatians: **This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?**²²⁰

²¹⁹ Acts 15:23-29

²²⁰ Galatians 3:2-3

Just like the household of Cornelius, the Christians in Galatia received the HOLY SPIRIT when they believed the good news of the Gospel! So, Paul asked them that question to force them to remember how it was by faith, not by the works of the law, that they received the HOLY SPIRIT!

Then Paul asked the Galatians if they were “**foolish**” enough to think that fleshly ordinances (like circumcision or clean eating) could make them *more* pure, perfect, or complete than faith in JESUS *if they weren't even necessary for them to receive the amazing gift of the HOLY SPIRIT!*



Plus, Paul asked the Galatians: **Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?**²²¹

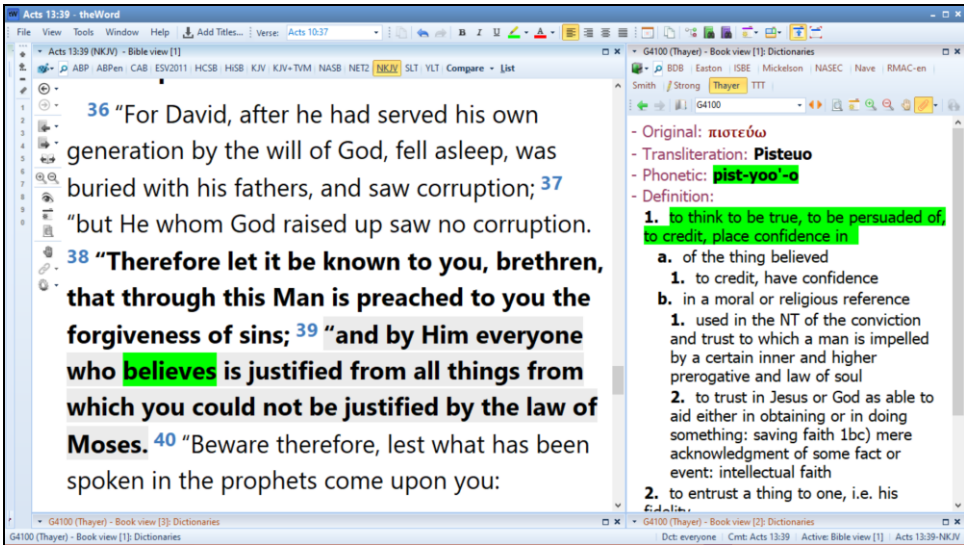
Did JESUS tell the Roman Centurion of Capernaum to have his whole household circumcised, or to start eating only Levitically clean foods to have his servant healed in Luke chapter 7?

Did Peter tell the Roman Centurion of Caesarea to have his whole household circumcised, or to start eating only Levitically clean foods to receive the HOLY SPIRIT in Acts chapter 10?

²²¹ Galatians 3:5

No, by Acts chapter 15, both Paul and Peter were fully realizing something that was already proven to be true. They were realizing that GOD was working miracles and pouring out His HOLY SPIRIT on anyone who put their faith in JESUS as their LORD and Savior!

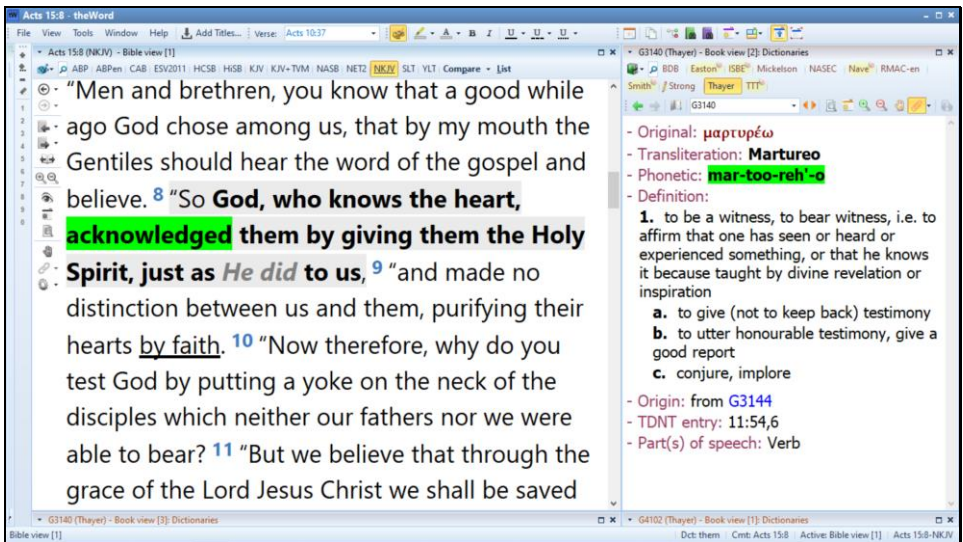
Thus, Paul was already preaching: **“Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.”**²²²



And with this contrast between “justification by faith in JESUS” compared to “justification through the law of Moses” in mind, we next see that Peter said: **“God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us.”** And the word here translated as “acknowledged” is: **mar-too-reh'-o**, which means: **“to bear witness”**.²²³

²²² Acts 13:39

²²³ Acts 15:8



Basically, Peter said: GOD knows the heart and **GOD Himself bore witness** to the Gentiles by giving them the HOLY SPIRIT just as He did to the Jews! **Therefore, it was contradicting the testimony of GOD to claim that the Gentiles still needed to be circumcised or eat only Levitically clean foods to be justified or sanctified!**

Now, to understand just how important Peter's point was: please think back to the book of Exodus. There, GOD described to Moses exactly how the Tabernacle was to be built and consecrated over **seven** long and detailed chapters.

Exodus 25-31

1. Exodus 25 – The Ark, The Table, and The Lampstand
2. Exodus 26 – The Construction of the Tabernacle
3. Exodus 27 – The Altar and The Courtyard
4. Exodus 28 – The Garments of the Priests
5. Exodus 29 – The Consecration of the Priests
6. Exodus 30 – The Altar of Incense, The Temple Shekel, The Laver, The Oil, and The Incense
7. Exodus 31 – The Chosen Craftsmen and The Weekly Sabbath

Then, chapters 35 through 40 within the book of Exodus describe Moses leading the people as they followed GOD's instructions to the letter while building the Tabernacle, constructing the furnishings,

fashioning the priestly garments, and finally assembling every item together.

Exodus 35-40

- 1. Exodus 35 - Willing Donations and Willing Workers**
- 2. Exodus 36 - The Building of the Tabernacle**
- 3. Exodus 37 - The Making of the Golden Articles**
- 4. Exodus 38 - The Altar, The Courtyard, and the Inventory**
- 5. Exodus 39 - Fashioning the Garments**
- 6. Exodus 40 - Setting Up the Sanctuary**

Then, *after* the people perfectly obeyed all of GOD's detailed instructions for the Tabernacle, it is written: **Then the cloud covered the Tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the Tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the Tabernacle of meeting, because the cloud rested above it, and the glory of the LORD filled the Tabernacle.**²²⁴

So, can you imagine someone stepping forward after GOD filled the Tabernacle with His glory, to say: ***"Wait! The laver isn't big enough!"***? No, GOD knew when the Tabernacle was perfectly ready, and He filled it with His glory at just the right time!

Then, hundreds of years later, after Solomon spent seven years building the temple, he sacrificed an innumerable multitude of sheep and oxen, and he had the Ark of the Covenant brought to the Temple! Then the Scriptures record: **It came to pass, when the priests came out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD, so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD.**²²⁵

But after all of that, can we imagine someone pointing out that **the building that GOD just deemed worthy of filling with His Glory** didn't perfectly match the instructions He gave in Exodus for the Tabernacle!? Truly, GOD filling the temple with His glory proved that GOD accepted the temple even though it was not exactly built according to the pattern He showed Moses on Mount Sinai!

²²⁴ Exodus 40:3-35

²²⁵ 1 Kings 8:10-11

And with this fact understood, Scripture asks: **Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?**²²⁶ In Acts chapter 10, these words were true of Cornelius and all those who received the HOLY SPIRIT that day along with him! So, when someone criticized Cornelius (or any of the other Gentiles who had been filled with the HOLY SPIRIT) they were presuming to know *better than GOD* what was required for cleansing a person!

Meanwhile, the fact is, in the First Covenant GOD used Levitical methods of outward cleansing to prepare His temples for His glory, but in the New Covenant GOD uses the far better method of the blood of His Son, JESUS CHRIST to prepare us to be His living, spiritual temples!

Therefore, Peter went on to say: **GOD “made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith”**²²⁷. Brothers and Sisters, this is the Good News of the New Covenant, but it is also the Stumbling Stone that trips up all those who won’t let go of the **“foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances of the First Covenant!”**²²⁸

Purification or Justification by faith in JESUS is not compatible with the purification or justification by the works of the Levitical Law that rely on foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances like circumcision.

Therefore, Paul explained: **What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith; but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. Why? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone. As it is written: “Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense, and whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.”**²²⁹

²²⁶ 1 Corinthians 3:16

²²⁷ Acts 15:9

²²⁸ Hebrews 9:10

²²⁹ Romans 9:30-33

JESUS is the Stumbling Stone, and those who seek righteousness by the works of the law performed in the flesh (such as mandatory circumcision or Levitical food restrictions) stumble over JESUS and the Gospel of the New Covenant as if they were tripping over a stone placed in their path!

You see, those things were given to us by GOD to show us just how much JESUS truly accomplished by His loving death at the cross, and just how pure His blood truly makes us! Yes, one drop of our LORD's precious blood makes us purer and cleaner than a thousand years of perfect Levitical cleanliness!

So, those foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances were given to Israel to reveal how impossible it was to purify a person without the blood of the Eternally Spotless Lamb of GOD! And, only when we fully understand all that the Apostles went through to be Levitically clean, can we fully understand why they were so amazed by the Gospel of Grace!

Picture observing all (yes, all!) of the verses found between Leviticus chapter 11 and Leviticus chapter 16 *every single day of your life!* Ritually bathing, just in case you might have come in contact with something unclean. Throwing out foods or drinks and smashing valuable containers every time rodents or an unclean insect touched them. Washing beds, couches, and any other object that came in contact with a family member who had a discharge, such as blood or any other liquid.

Leviticus 11-15

- 1. Leviticus 11 - Clean Food and Drink Ordinances**
- 2. Leviticus 12 - Female Cleansing Ordinances**
- 3. Leviticus 13 - Ordinances of Leprous Uncleaness**
- 4. Leviticus 14 - Ordinances for Cleansing Lepers and Their Houses**
- 5. Leviticus 15 - Ordinances Concerning Unclean Discharges from the Body**

“Thus you shall separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness, lest they die in their uncleanness when they defile My tabernacle that is among them.”

Leviticus 15:31

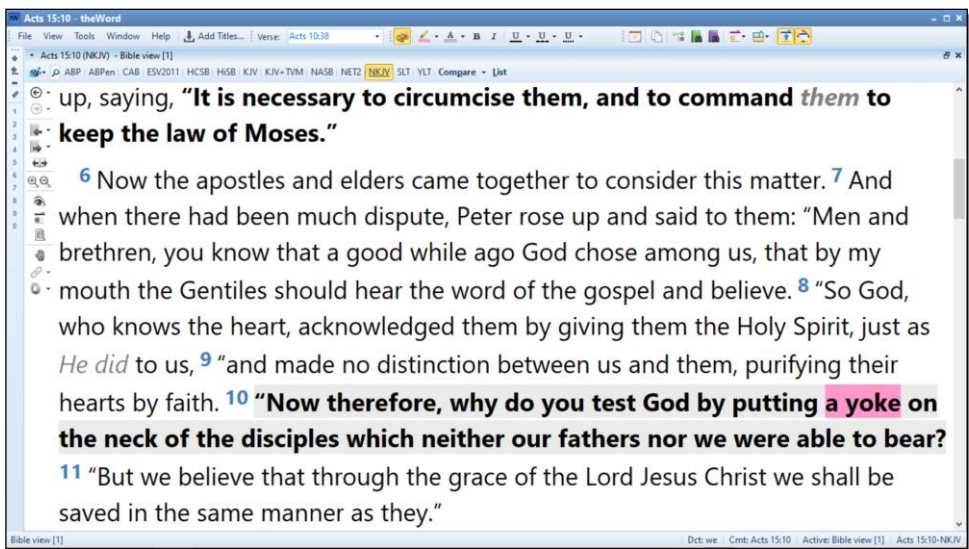
Please imagine you have observed **all** (yes, all!) of those ordinances faithfully throughout your entire life, and then picture GOD sending you to the home of an uncircumcised Gentile who never kept any of those regulations.

Then, please imagine watching that uncircumcised, Levitically unclean Gentile (and all who were assembled in his Levitically unclean house) receive the HOLY SPIRIT and speak in other languages, just as you did on one of the most awe-inspiring days of your life - the day of Pentecost! No wonder why Luke recorded Peter and those who were with him were thrown into amazement!

But later, after that amazement wore off, *if* you heard that someone was trying to say that those same Gentiles later had to purify themselves with the Levitical foods, drinks, washings, and fleshly ordinances of Leviticus 11 through 16, *you might say, as Peter did:* **“Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?”**²³⁰

It is essential that we fully understand, **“the yoke”** Peter was referring to must be found within the sentence: **“It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses”**. Yes, that is the sentence Peter was contradicting, and labeling **“a yoke”**. And the passage that best explains **“the yoke”** Peter was speaking of in Acts chapter 15, is found in the closely related book of Galatians.

²³⁰ Acts 15:10



There Paul wrote: **Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage. Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law. You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.**²³¹

Both Paul and Peter state that mandatory circumcision was part of a “**yoke**”! And both Paul and Peter explain that attempting to be “**justified by the law**” of Moses was also part of that same “**yoke**”. Plus, while Peter mentioned salvation by “**grace**” and contrasted it to “**the yoke**” of circumcision and parts of the law of Moses, Paul clearly states that taking on that Old Covenant “**yoke**” indicates that a person has: “**fallen from grace**”!

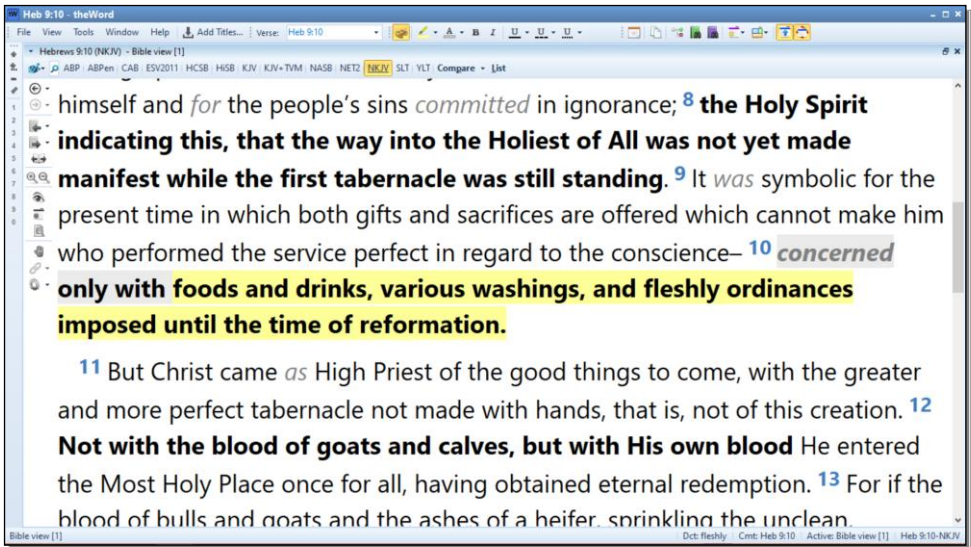
In fact, in the Continuity Debate, many have seen the contrast between the Old Mosaic Covenant and the New Messianic Covenant as a contrast between Law and Grace! And this is why John wrote: **For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.**²³²

However, while Peter and Paul contrasted “**grace**” and “**circumcision**” in Acts and Galatians, nowhere in Scripture is “**grace**”

²³¹ Galatians 5:1-4

²³² John 1:17

contrasted against the Sabbath, the Feasts, or any of the other laws of Moses that cannot be labeled: **“foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances”!**



For example, Hebrews explains: **It is good that the heart be established by grace, not with foods which have not profited those who have been occupied with them.**²³³

And, it is the **“foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances”** of the law that Paul calls **“works”** when he writes: **For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.**²³⁴

Likewise, Paul had those same **“foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances”** in mind when he declared: **“I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.”**²³⁵

But, before Acts chapter 10, the Apostles and Prophets of our LORD did not yet understand that righteousness did not come through the laws of Leviticus. Therefore, when Ezekiel was told by GOD Himself to cook his food over human dung, he refused the very voice of GOD

²³³ Hebrews 13:9

²³⁴ Ephesians 2:8-9

²³⁵ Galatians 2:21

from heaven because he had been carefully keeping the Leviticus 11 food laws his entire life. And, unlike what Peter experienced, GOD did not repeat Himself to Ezekiel.

However, when we see Peter resist the vision of Acts chapter 10 along with the threefold repeated command of the LORD, we can see just how seriously Peter and Ezekiel took the Leviticus 11 food laws! They saw those laws as the source of their righteousness, so they even resisted the LORD's voice from heaven when He contradicted **their** understanding of food!

Thus, we can be sure that Paul (a second-generation Pharisee) also took those fleshly laws very seriously. And proving this, he wrote: **If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.**²³⁶

Therefore, at some point in his life, Paul would have resisted GOD's actual voice from heaven, if he was told to **"rise, kill, and eat"** of the Levitically unclean animals. And he would have replied just as Peter and Ezekiel did. But those replies were all based on the idea of preserving their: **"righteousness that is in the law"**.

Meanwhile, *after* Paul came to faith in JESUS and understood the truth of the New Covenant, he wrote about the **"righteousness that is in the law"**: **"But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith."**²³⁷

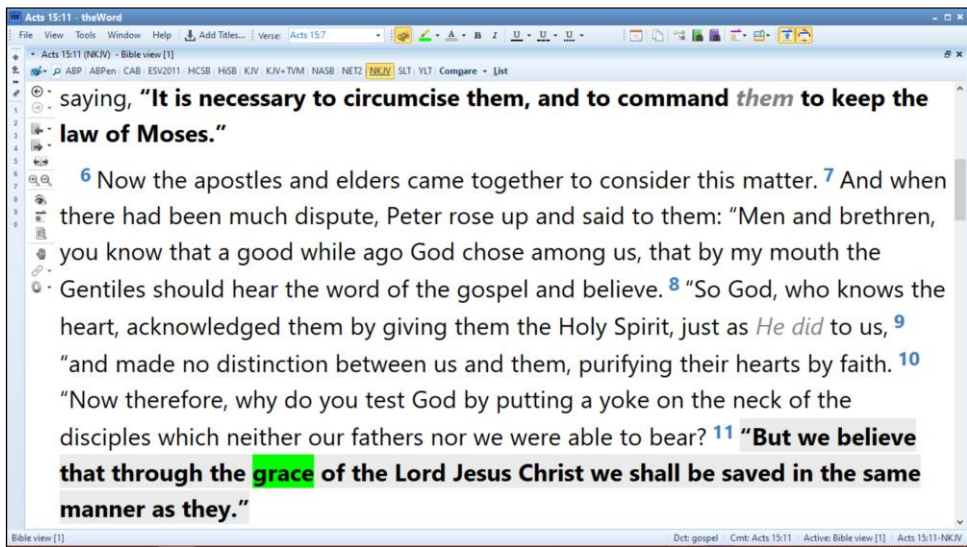
And because those two forms of righteousness are mutually exclusive since they represent two different priesthoods, the Levitical priesthood versus the Priesthood of the Messiah, Paul warned: **Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage. Indeed I, Paul,**

²³⁶ Philippians 3:4-6

²³⁷ Philippians 3:7-9

say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law. You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.²³⁸

Thus, with that corresponding passage fresh in our mind, we see that Peter closed out his contribution to the great debate by saying: **“But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they.”**²³⁹



Just as Paul did many times in his letters, in Acts 15 Peter openly contrasted mandatory physical circumcision, and mandatory adherence to certain fleshly components of the Law of Moses against the grace of the LORD JESUS CHRIST! And Peter based his argument on the fact that GOD accepted the Gentiles and even gave them the HOLY SPIRIT when they put their faith in JESUS as LORD! Then, when Peter was finished: **all the multitude kept silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul declaring how many miracles and wonders GOD had worked through them among the Gentiles.**²⁴⁰

In Acts chapter 15, Peter, Paul, and Barnabas testified how GOD filled the Gentiles with the HOLY SPIRIT and worked miracles among them

²³⁸ Galatians 5:1-4

²³⁹ Acts 15:11

²⁴⁰ Acts 15:12

as they heard the Gospel of JESUS and believed! And they took a firm stand against those who said that the Gentiles had to be circumcised and keep the Levitical Law of Moses after GOD had already approved of them!

But the next person to join them was James (or more literally: “Jacob”), a leading elder in the Jerusalem Church and the brother of JESUS.

After James quoted from Amos to prove that GOD foretold how He would save many Gentiles, he concluded: **“Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood. For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath.”**²⁴¹

The Apostles and Elders understood that this debate was primarily about circumcision, food, and the Levitical Laws of Moses concerning defilement. So, while everyone there fully understood that the Gentiles had to turn from all of their sins, James concluded that the Gentiles only had to avoid four forms of physical defilement that Moses recorded Gentiles were condemned for practicing.

Just as Moses recorded about Noah, the Gentiles were being told: **“Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs. But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood.”**²⁴² And because strangulation traps blood in the meat, strangled animals must also be avoided.

Likewise, as Paul explained in his letter to the Corinthians: **The things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord’s table and of the table of demons. Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?**²⁴³

And in the same letter, Paul wrote: **Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of**

²⁴¹ Acts 15:19-21

²⁴² Genesis 9:3-4

²⁴³ 1 Corinthians 10:20-22

Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not! Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For “the two,” He says, “shall become one flesh.” But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him. Flee sexual immorality! Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body! Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.²⁴⁴

Yes, while we see these four fleshly requirements confirmed over and over again in the Apostolic Scriptures, we also read things like: **“I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself”²⁴⁵, “Eat whatever is sold in the meat market, asking no questions for conscience’ sake”²⁴⁶, “Every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused...”²⁴⁷, and “Was anyone called while circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Was anyone called while uncircumcised? Let him not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters.”²⁴⁸**

So, the only harmonious interpretation of all that was said in Acts chapter 15 (that also conforms with everything else that the Bible has to say) is: the **“foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances”** of the first covenant (recorded in Leviticus 11 through 16) were only imposed on GOD’s people **“until the time of Reformation”**, which came when JESUS instituted the New Covenant.

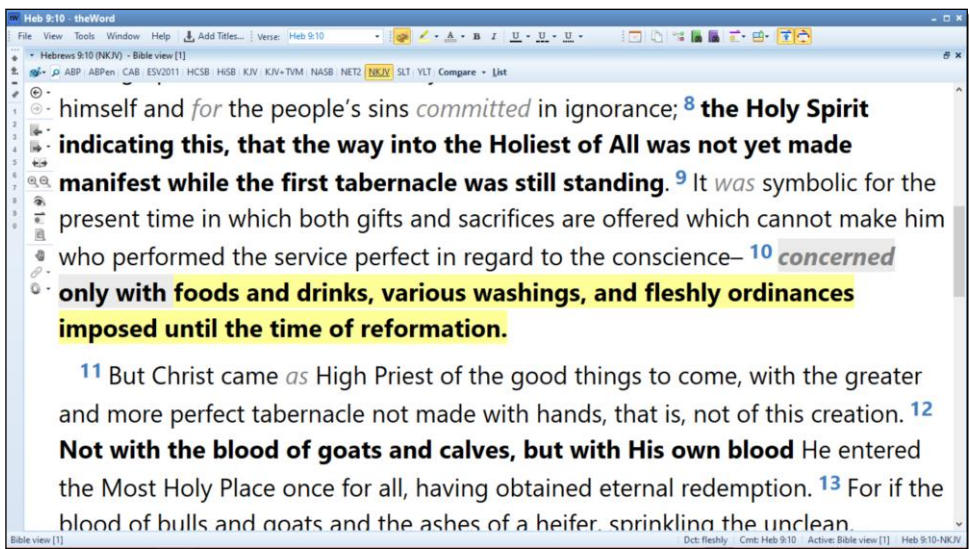
²⁴⁴ 1 Corinthians 6:15-20

²⁴⁵ Romans 14:14a

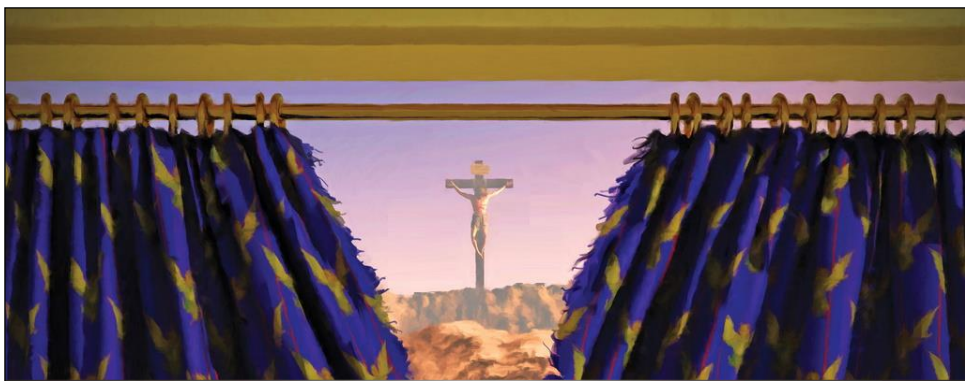
²⁴⁶ 1 Corinthians 10:25

²⁴⁷ 1 Timothy 4:4a

²⁴⁸ 1 Corinthians 7:18-19

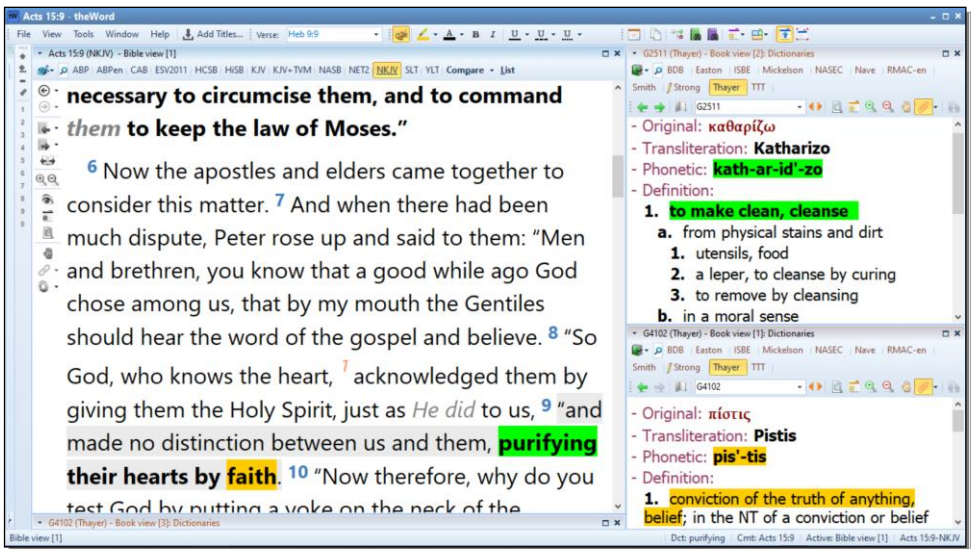


For this reason, the veil to the Holy of Holies was symbolically closed in the Mosaic Covenant, even to the High Priest who performed the services as the holiest man in all of Israel, to demonstrate that the laws of ritual cleansing given in Leviticus could not open the way into heaven for anyone!



The Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing. Hebrews 9:8

Instead, those laws of ritual cleansing were given to show the world just how holy and separated GOD is from sin, so we could all fully appreciate the magnificent priesthood of JESUS our Savior and the staggering grace of the New Covenant in His blood!



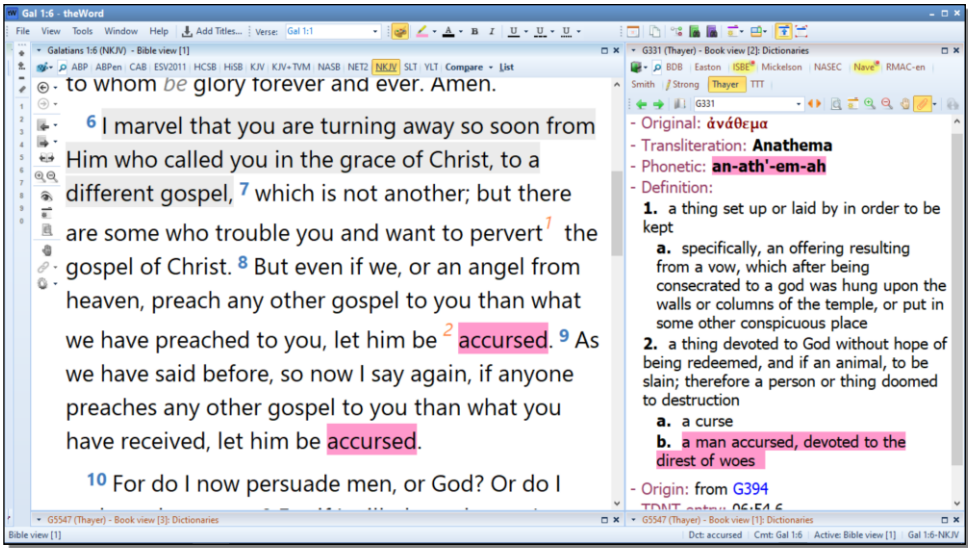
And with this larger picture as a backdrop, we can see how Paul, Barnabas, Peter, and James finally convinced all of the brethren in Jerusalem that the mandatory “**foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances**” of the Levitical Covenant did not carry over into the New Covenant in the MESSIAH!



Then, as one unified body they wrote: **The apostles, the elders, and the brethren, To the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia: Greetings. Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, “You must be circumcised and keep the law”–to**

whom we gave no such commandment– it seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who will also report the same things by word of mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.²⁴⁹

And because of this letter, anyone who lays any fleshly requirements on any Christian such as mandatory physical circumcision or mandatory compliance with the food restrictions of Leviticus chapter 11 as part of their: justification, purification, sanctification, or relationship towards GOD is “**accursed**” in accordance with Paul’s words in Galatians chapter 1.



Thus, we echo Paul's words today, who wrote: **If I still preach circumcision, why do I still suffer persecution? Then the offense of the cross has ceased. I could wish that those who trouble you would even cut themselves off!**²⁵⁰

²⁴⁹ Acts 15:23-29

²⁵⁰ Galatians 5:11-12

Yes, this is what the Scriptures say to those who teach about Spirit-filled Gentiles: **“It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.”** when we study and apply all that has been progressively revealed in all of the Bible and the Bible alone!

Chapter 7: The New and Living Way

When most Christians hear the word “**reformation**” they think of Martin Luther posting his 95 points of debate against Roman Catholic doctrine on a wooden church door in Whittenburg, Germany. But the Bible records an infinitely more important “**Reformation**” inaugurated by our LORD and Savior Himself!

Instead of nailing fallible human-penned words to the door of a building, the infallible, eternally existing, sinless Word of GOD was nailed to the cross to save all who call on Him from their sins. And when the Son of GOD expired, the HOLY SPIRIT announced the “Great Reformation” by tearing the veil of the temple in two (from the top to the bottom²⁵¹)! In this way, GOD proclaimed that the way into the Holy of Holies was finally opened through the blood of JESUS CHRIST!

However, before we learn more about the greatest covenantal reformation in all of human history, we need to understand how the veil which was torn on Passover in 30 A.D. had not always been closed, even within the First Covenant!

No, up until Leviticus chapter 10, the veil in front of the Ark of the Covenant could be opened and the priests *could* enter the Holy of Holies as long as they carefully followed the laws of the priesthood given to them by GOD. But two priests named Nadab and Abihu, who were the sons of Aaron the high priest as well as the nephews of Moses, violated the priestly laws GOD had established when they offered unauthorized incense before GOD in the Tabernacle.²⁵²

Then, *after* they died before the LORD and were buried in Leviticus chapter 10, in Leviticus chapter 16, GOD told Moses to tell Aaron that the priests could no longer enter the Holy of Holies. From that time onward, only the high priest himself could briefly enter the chamber where the Ark of the Covenant was housed once a year on the Day of Atonement.²⁵³

²⁵¹ Matthew 27:50-52

²⁵² Leviticus 10:1-2

²⁵³ Leviticus 16:1-2

Meanwhile, between two very clear references to the death of Nadab and Abihu, and just before GOD declared the veil of the Tabernacle was 'shut' and the Holy of Holies was 'off-limits', GOD presented some very specific laws of ritual cleansing. Also, the LORD stated that those laws were given to help the people who *lived in the presence of His Tabernacle* to avoid the terrible fate of Nadab and Abihu.

Leviticus 10-16

1. **Leviticus 10 – The Death of Nadab and Abihu**
2. **Leviticus 11 – Clean Food and Drink Ordinances**
3. **Leviticus 12 – Female Cleansing Ordinances**
4. **Leviticus 13 – Ordinances of Leprous Uncleaness**
5. **Leviticus 14 – Ordinances for Cleansing Lepers and Their Houses**
6. **Leviticus 15 – Ordinances Concerning Unclean Discharges from the Body**
7. **Leviticus 16 – Because of the Death of Nadab and Abihu: Restrictions are set for the Holy of Holies and The Day of Atonement is Instituted**

Yes, the Levitical laws of ritual cleansing were given *after* Nadab and Abihu died before the LORD in His Tabernacle, and they are found in Leviticus within chapters 11 through 15. Also, GOD concluded the list by saying: **“Thus you shall separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness, lest they die in their uncleanness when they defile My tabernacle that is among them.”**²⁵⁴

Therefore, the Laws of Leviticus 11 through 15 (*laws that mention over and over again that they were about ritual “cleansing” or “purification”*) were instituted to protect the people from dying; if, *like Nadab and Abihu*, they somehow defiled GOD’s Tabernacle that was among them.

²⁵⁴ Leviticus 15:31

Leviticus 11-15

1. Leviticus 11 - Clean Food and Drink Ordinances
2. Leviticus 12 - Female Cleansing Ordinances
3. Leviticus 13 - Ordinances of Leprous Uncleaness
4. Leviticus 14 - Ordinances for Cleansing Lepers and Their Houses
5. Leviticus 15 - Ordinances Concerning Unclean Discharges from the Body

**“Thus you shall separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness, lest they die in their uncleanness when they defile My tabernacle that is among them.”
Leviticus 15:31**

Then, immediately after those laws were given, the veil of the Holy of Holies was symbolically shut to show that the sacrifices, ritual cleansings, ritual purifications, and the Levitical priesthood of the First Covenant could not adequately purify even the High Priest himself to the point that he could enter the presence of GOD!

NOW THE LORD SPOKE TO MOSES AFTER THE DEATH OF THE TWO SONS OF AARON, WHEN THEY OFFERED PROFANE FIRE BEFORE THE LORD, AND DIED; AND THE LORD SAID TO MOSES: “TELL AARON YOUR BROTHER NOT TO COME AT JUST ANY TIME INTO THE HOLY PLACE INSIDE THE VEIL, BEFORE THE MERCY SEAT WHICH IS ON THE ARK, LEST HE DIE; FOR I WILL APPEAR IN THE CLOUD ABOVE THE MERCY SEAT.” LEVITICUS 16:1-2

Therefore, in the book of Hebrews, just before describing the Tabernacle, the closed veil, and the ultimate cleansing ritual of the First Covenant performed on the Day of Atonement, it is written: **Then indeed, even the first covenant had ordinances of divine service**

and the earthly sanctuary.²⁵⁵ Here, the writer of Hebrews is pointing out that everything he is going to say about the Tabernacle, the High Priest, the Day of Atonement, and the Holy of Holies in this passage is, in reality, all about “the First Covenant”.

So, with the fact that this is all a discussion about “the First Covenant” in mind, we read: **Now when these things had been thus prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing the services. But into the second part, the high priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people’s sins committed in ignorance...**²⁵⁶

As you can see, the writer wanted his readers to understand that even the High Priest (the holiest, most Levitically clean man in all of Israel) could not enter the holy of holies at will! Also, Hebrews is making the point here that even the High Priest in the First Covenant had committed sins he had to atone for, a problem that our Eternal High Priest JESUS CHRIST never had!

Then, with all of these facts about “the First Covenant” in mind, Hebrews explains: **The HOLY SPIRIT [was] indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing. It was symbolic of the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience— concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation.**²⁵⁷

The Bible teaches that within the First Covenant, even the High Priest who occupied the holiest human role of that covenant and performed the holiest services could not be cleansed enough to enter the holy of Holies at will. And that was true because the only purification that the First Covenant offered was **“concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances [that were] imposed until the time of reformation”**.

²⁵⁵ Hebrews 9:1

²⁵⁶ Hebrews 9:6-7

²⁵⁷ Hebrews 9:8-10

But into the second part the high priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people's sins committed in ignorance; **the Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing.** It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience— **concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation.** Hebrews 9:7-10

However, JESUS reformed the way we are “cleansed” or “purified” in the New Covenant; and when He did that, He reformed the way we approach GOD! Truly, the New and Living Way JESUS opened through the veil into the Holy of Holies *no longer relies on* the foods and drinks, various washings, or fleshly ordinances of the First Covenant *for cleansing or purification!* And through the MESSIAH's blood, we are cleansed and purified *spiritually*, not just physically!

Therefore, just after writing about those first covenant methods of outward cleansing that were only “**imposed until the time of reformation**”, the writer explained: **But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.**²⁵⁸

Surely, the most important covenantal reformation in history occurred when JESUS ushered in the New Covenant and its “**New and Living Way**”! Truly, only the New Covenant founded on the precious blood of JESUS can prepare GOD's people to enter the Holy of Holies behind the veil! Yes, through the amazing grace of the New Covenant, every saint can approach GOD in ways even the High Priest could not in the First Covenant!

²⁵⁸ Hebrews 9:11-12

So, this is why Hebrews goes on to explain: **Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil - that is, His flesh - and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near...** ²⁵⁹

Brothers and Sisters, only when we understand the message of Hebrews chapter 9, *that in the First Covenant, even the High Priest could not boldly approach the throne of GOD “**through the veil**”*, can we fully appreciate the New and Living Way of grace that allows every disciple of JESUS to approach His throne “**through the veil**”!

Before the New Covenant in the blood of JESUS was established, GOD set up the First Covenant to perfectly foreshadow all that JESUS would do²⁶⁰, to prepare the Way for us to approach the Father. And the Tabernacle, the priesthood, the animal sacrifices, and *even the laws of ritual purification* were all meant to help us understand the amazing grace of the New Covenant when it arrived!

And this is what Paul meant when he explained: **Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.**²⁶¹

After the death of JESUS that ushered in *the Biblical reformation*, the Apostles and Disciples of our LORD would have never relied on the Levitical system of purification for righteousness! No, they understood that through the blood of JESUS, we have direct access to the actual Throne of GOD, which is much better than the access the High Priest himself had who presided over the temple in Jerusalem until 70 AD.

²⁵⁹ Hebrews 10:19-22

²⁶⁰ Hebrews 10:1

²⁶¹ Galatians 3:24-25

But into the second part the high priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people's sins committed in ignorance; the Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing. It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience— **concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation.** Hebrews 9:7-10

Yes, after seeing how GOD filled the Gentiles with the HOLY SPIRIT simply because they put their faith in JESUS as their LORD, the Apostles, and the Jerusalem Elders all *eventually* understood that the foods, drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances of the First Covenant were no longer required in the New Covenant! And the moment they fully realized and declared the truth of the reformation that our LORD and Savior JESUS CHRIST inaugurated was chronicled by Luke in Acts chapter 15!

BUT SOME OF THE SECT OF THE PHARISEES WHO BELIEVED ROSE UP, SAYING, "IT IS NECESSARY TO CIRCUMCISE THEM, AND TO COMMAND THEM TO KEEP THE LAW OF MOSES." NOW THE APOSTLES AND ELDERS CAME TOGETHER TO CONSIDER THIS MATTER. AND WHEN THERE HAD BEEN MUCH DISPUTE, PETER ROSE UP AND SAID TO THEM: "MEN AND BRETHREN, YOU KNOW THAT A GOOD WHILE AGO GOD CHOSE AMONG US, THAT BY MY MOUTH THE GENTILES SHOULD HEAR THE WORD OF THE GOSPEL AND BELIEVE. "SO GOD, WHO KNOWS THE HEART, ACKNOWLEDGED THEM BY GIVING THEM THE HOLY SPIRIT, JUST AS HE DID TO US, "AND MADE NO DISTINCTION BETWEEN US AND THEM, PURIFYING THEIR HEARTS BY FAITH. "NOW THEREFORE, WHY DO YOU TEST GOD BY PUTTING A YOKE ON THE NECK OF THE DISCIPLES WHICH NEITHER OUR FATHERS NOR WE WERE ABLE TO BEAR? "BUT WE BELIEVE THAT THROUGH THE GRACE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST WE SHALL BE SAVED IN THE SAME MANNER AS THEY." ACTS 15:5-11

Peter demonstrated that he understood that there was "a New and Living Way" in Acts 15 when he responded negatively to the

statement: **“It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.”**²⁶²

Likewise, Peter demonstrated that he understood the New and Living Way in JESUS offered a *reformed* method of purification that did not rely on circumcision or adherence to Leviticus 11 through 15, when he said: **“So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.”**²⁶³

Therefore, Peter called the Old Covenant laws of Levitical purification a heavy, burdensome yoke, when he replied to the demands of Acts 15:5: **“Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord JESUS CHRIST, we shall be saved in the same manner as they.”**²⁶⁴

In his Gospel account, John wrote: **For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.**²⁶⁵ Likewise, Peter contrasted *purification through circumcision and the works of the Law* to *purification by grace through faith!* And that difference in *purification* methods is the main contrasting detail between the Old Covenant, and the New and Living Way!

²⁶² Acts 15:5-11

²⁶³ Acts 15:8-9

²⁶⁴ Acts 15:10-11

²⁶⁵ John 1:17

FOR **THE LAW** WAS GIVEN
THROUGH MOSES

GRACE AND TRUTH CAME THROUGH
JESUS CHRIST. JOHN 1:17

You are to **sanctify yourselves** and be holy because I am holy. You must not defile yourselves by any of the swarming things that creep on the ground. Leviticus 11:44

"...that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are **sanctified by faith in Me.**"
Acts 26:18

GOD, WHO KNOWS THE HEART, ACKNOWLEDGED THEM BY GIVING THEM THE HOLY SPIRIT, JUST AS HE DID TO US, AND MADE NO DISTINCTION BETWEEN US AND THEM, PURIFYING THEIR HEARTS **BY FAITH**. ...WE BELIEVE THAT **THROUGH THE GRACE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST WE SHALL BE SAVED** IN THE SAME MANNER AS THEY." ACTS 15:5-11

But not all of GOD'S Laws recorded by Moses had to do with *cleansing* or *purification*! No, most of the Laws recorded by Moses were about good and evil, right and wrong, or more simply stated: *morality*! And those laws that are addressing "*morality*" can be labeled "*moral*" laws.

Leviticus 11-15

1. Leviticus 11 - **Clean** Food and Drink Ordinances
2. Leviticus 12 - Female **Cleansing** Ordinances
3. Leviticus 13 - Ordinances of Leprous **Uncleanness**
4. Leviticus 14 - Ordinances for **Cleansing** Lepers and Their Houses
5. Leviticus 15 - Ordinances Concerning **Unclean** Discharges from the Body

"Thus you shall separate the children of Israel from their **uncleanness, lest they die in their **uncleanness** when they defile My tabernacle that is among them."**
Leviticus 15:31

Now, to find out if we can all spot the difference between a *Moral Law* and a *Cleansing Law*, please consider the following verses. **"By these you shall become unclean; whoever touches the carcass of any of them shall be unclean until evening."**²⁶⁶ And: **"You shall not**

²⁶⁶ Leviticus 11:24

take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.”²⁶⁷

**CAN YOU SPOT THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN
A MORAL LAW AND A CLEANSING LAW?**

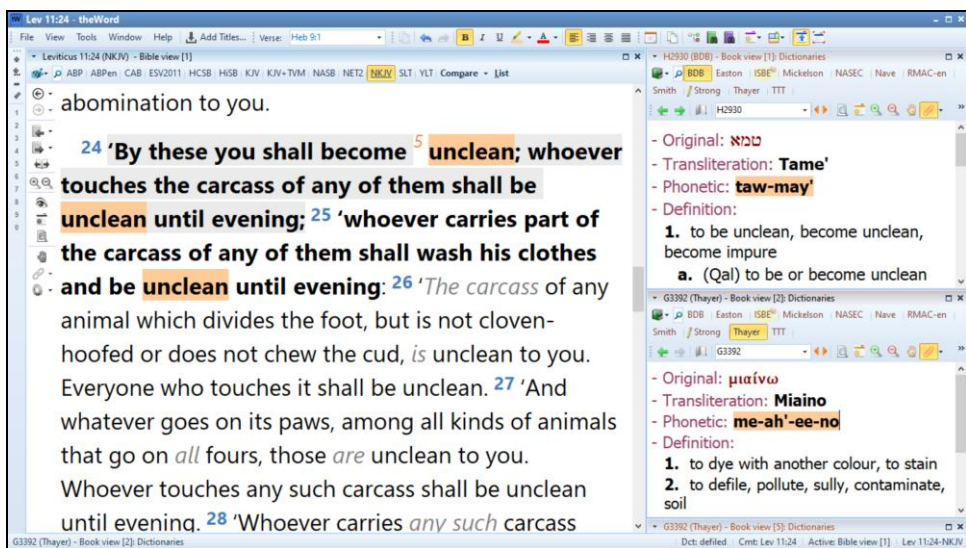
**“By these you shall become unclean; whoever touches the carcass of any of them shall be unclean until evening.”
Leviticus 11:24**

**“You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.”
Exodus 20:7**

Do we think that the Letter written by the Apostles in Acts chapter 15 means we can take the LORD’s name in vain now? Certainly not! It is immoral to blaspheme our GOD’s holy name, even by using His name or His titles casually! But, is it immoral to eat pork? Didn’t GOD say it could only make a person Levitically “**unclean until evening**”?

According to Scripture, eating pork would have only made a person Levitically “**unclean until evening**”! And, all the pork eater had to do to be cleansed was: *wash with water and wait until evening*. So, the Food laws of Leviticus 11 were about cleansing, not *morality*!

²⁶⁷ Exodus 20:7



And this is why JESUS declared: **“There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man. If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!”**²⁶⁸

But to this very day, people who think like the Pharisees believe that food *is* a moral issue! Thus, about the Pharisees who think in that way the Scriptures record: that just after JESUS said **“It is not what enters into the mouth that defiles the man”**, Then His disciples came and said to JESUS, **“Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?”**²⁶⁹

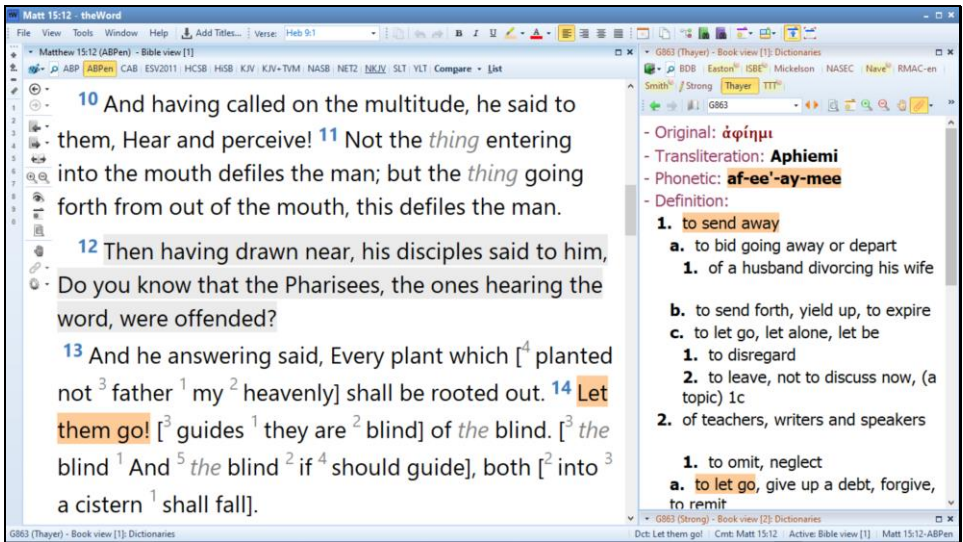
To which JESUS replied: **“Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch.”**²⁷⁰

Sadly, those who cannot see **“It is not what enters into the mouth that defiles the man, but what proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man.”** are blind, according to JESUS our omniscient MESSIAH! And, if someone refuses to hear what JESUS is teaching, we have been commanded to (literally, according to the Greek) **“send them away”** or **“let them leave”**.

²⁶⁸ Mark 7:14-16

²⁶⁹ Matthew 15:10-12

²⁷⁰ Matthew 15:13-14



But first, like JESUS, we must earnestly try to reach those who have been influenced by the blind Pharisees. And we see our LORD reaching out to the people, by saying: **“Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him, because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, thus purifying all foods?”**²⁷¹

No one is morally defiled by eating *even* Levitically unclean foods because they simply enter the stomach and pass through the digestive system. But we *can* be morally defiled by consuming blood, things strangled, or things polluted with idolatry.

Similarly, Paul also clearly confirmed that no one is *morally* defiled by what they eat, when he wrote about food, explaining: **All things are lawful for me, but all things are not profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything. Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will do away with both this stomach and these foods.**²⁷²

Also, Paul confirmed that no one is morally defiled by Levitically unclean food any longer when he declared: **I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of**

²⁷¹ Mark 7:18-19

²⁷² 1 Corinthians 6:12-13a

itself. And: Every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving.²⁷³

But, after our LORD taught: “**whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him**” He then explained: “**What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man.**”²⁷⁴

Friends, JESUS was definitely teaching that food is not a moral issue! But then He listed the *immoral* things that proceed from the hearts of men that *truly were moral problems*! He listed things like evil thoughts, adulteries, blasphemy, pride, or even foolishness; or more literally “thoughtlessness”. And, even though it took the Apostles and Disciples of our LORD 20 years to understand His message, eventually they realized the truth in Acts chapter 15!

The screenshot shows a Bible software window with the text of Mark 7:23. The text is: "19 'because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, thus purifying all foods?' 20 And He said, 'What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. 21 'For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, 22 'thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. 23 'All these evil things come from within and defile a man.'" The word "foolishness" is highlighted in orange. To the right, two dictionary windows are open. The first window is for G877 (Aphrosune) with the definition: "1. foolishness, folly, senselessness | 2. thoughtlessness, recklessness". The second window is for G878 (Aphron) with the definition: "1. without reason | 2. senseless, foolish, stupid | 3. without reflection or intelligence, acting rashly".

They finally understood and they clearly proclaimed that the foods and drinks, the various washings, and the fleshly ordinances of the First Covenant that were “**imposed until the time of reformation**” were no longer a requirement in the New Covenant!

²⁷³ 1 Timothy 4:4

²⁷⁴ Mark 7:20-23

They understood and recorded that the Gentiles should not observe those laws that were concerned only with Levitical cleansing or purification. In fact, they confirmed that the Gentiles still should not observe the laws of Levitical purification eight years *after* the Jerusalem Council issued their letter, in Acts chapter 21.

According to Acts 21, (in approximately 57 A.D.) Luke witnessed firsthand the following interaction. He recorded: **When we had come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. On the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present. When he had greeted them, he told in detail those things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.**²⁷⁵

Then Luke described how James and the Elders of Jerusalem responded, writing: **And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord. And they said to him, “You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law; but they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs.**²⁷⁶

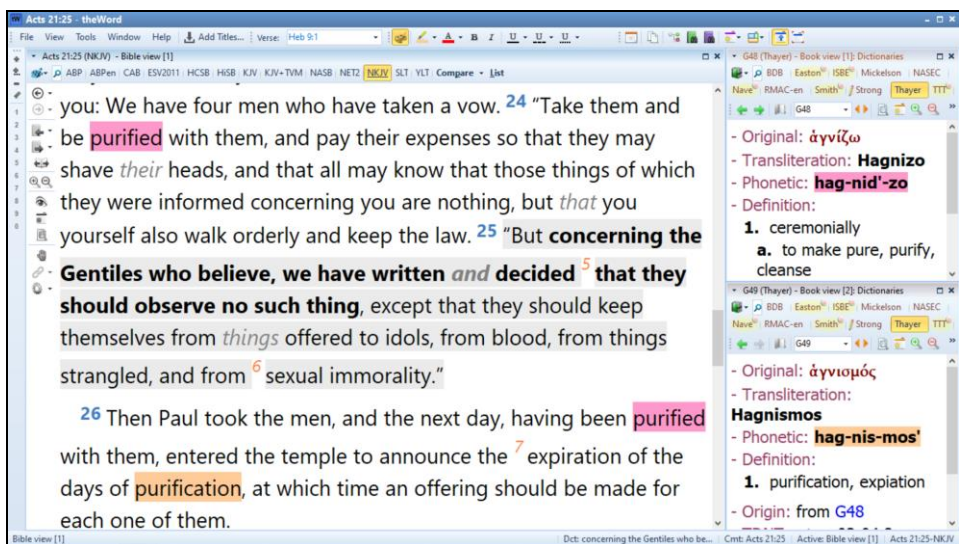
And after instructing Paul to pay for the Levitical purification of four men who had taken a vow (according to the regulations of Numbers chapter 6), James and the Elders went on to say: **“But concerning the Gentiles who believe, we have written and decided that they should observe no such thing, except that they should keep themselves from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality.”**²⁷⁷

Truly, anyone can see that purification through the Levitical Law was mentioned three separate times in Acts chapter 21. Meanwhile, James and the Jerusalem Elders clearly said: the Gentiles should observe no such thing! Then, they went on to mention the letter issued in Acts chapter 15, a letter that also essentially stated: the Gentiles should not observe the ritual laws of purification in Leviticus!

²⁷⁵ Acts 21:17-19

²⁷⁶ Acts 21:20-21

²⁷⁷ Acts 21:25



Now, just in case someone asks you why you are confident that Acts chapter 15 was about purification through the works of the Law, we should mention here that Peter clearly thought the issue was about purification when he explained: GOD *purified* the hearts of the Gentiles by faith. And because they were purified by faith, they no longer needed to be purified by the works of the Law!²⁷⁸

So, we see in Scripture that there was an Old Levitical system of purification by the works of the Law, and there is a New and Living Way of purification by faith in JESUS! And those who twist the Scriptures in order to claim that Christians still need to observe the old Levitical Laws of purification, are preaching a different Gospel!

That is why Paul described his confrontation with Peter as *a Gospel issue* when Paul wrote: **Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face because he was to be blamed; for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with [Peter], so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.**²⁷⁹

Then Paul wrote that compelling Gentiles to live as Jews by convincing them to observe the foods, drinks, various washings, or fleshly

²⁷⁸ Acts 15:5-11

²⁷⁹ Galatians 2:11-13

ordinances of the First Covenant was a Gospel issue when he wrote: **But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, “If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews? “We who are Jews by [birth], and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.”**²⁸⁰

So, we can see that even moving away from a Gentile who is eating foods classified as Levitically unclean is a form of twisting the Gospel of JESUS CHRIST! And compelling Gentiles to live as Jews (or: Judaizing) always involves convincing others to observe certain laws that were only imposed until the time of reformation; Laws concerning circumcision, foods, drinks, various washings, and other fleshly ordinances!

Yes, the Gospel is why Paul said he resisted the men in Antioch and later Jerusalem who said: **“It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.”**²⁸¹ And, the fact is, Titus was one of the men those Pharisees were speaking about, in Acts chapter 15! But in Galatians, Paul explained his account of that Great Debate!

Paul explained: **Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and also took Titus with me. And I went up by revelation, and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of reputation, lest by any means I might run, or had run, in vain. Yet not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.**²⁸²

But then Paul wrote about those who tried to compel Titus to be circumcised: **This occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage),**

²⁸⁰ Galatians 2:14-16

²⁸¹ Acts 15:5

²⁸² Galatians 2:1-3

to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.²⁸³

Anyone who, like Paul, realizes that debates about physical circumcision and mandatory diet restrictions are really attacks on the Gospel, won't ever yield (*for even an hour*) to those who try to command Christians to be circumcised or keep the food laws of Leviticus! No, they will take their stand with Paul and point out that the Gentiles (*such as Cornelius*) did not receive the HOLY SPIRIT by the works of the Law! No, instead they received the HOLY SPIRIT by faith in the truth of the Gospel!

Therefore, after facing the persecution Paul endured from false teachers who wanted to bring those disciples entrusted to his care into bondage, those who stand with Paul and the rest of the Apostles will eventually say with him: **There are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.²⁸⁴**

The fact is, we are saved: “**by grace through faith**”! But Brothers and Sisters, this glorious truth was proclaimed by Paul only a few words before he wrote: **Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands— that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.²⁸⁵**

And then Paul explained: **For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, that**

²⁸³ Galatians 2:4-5

²⁸⁴ Galatians 1:7-9

²⁸⁵ Ephesians 2:8 & 11-13

He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.²⁸⁶

You see, the context surrounding the passage: **“By grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of GOD”²⁸⁷**, isn’t obedience to the 10 Commandments, or even the Laws of GOD regarding the Sabbath or the Feasts! No, friends, the context surrounding the declaration that we are saved by grace through faith, is circumcision, and the law of commandments contained in ordinances that were only **“imposed until the time of reformation”²⁸⁸**!

Thus, when GOD abolished the laws concerning foods, drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances like circumcision through the cross of JESUS CHRIST our LORD, He made peace between the Jew and the Gentile! Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of GOD!

Therefore, an uncircumcised disciple of JESUS CHRIST who does not follow the fleshly ordinances of Leviticus 11 through 15 is just as much a part of the Body of CHRIST as a Messianic Jew who has kept those ordinances from their youth! And we must understand, if anyone tells you otherwise, they are cursed, according to the Apostle Paul!

So, given how firmly Paul opposed those who tried to compel Gentiles to live like Jews, why then did Paul write the section of Romans we know as chapter 14?

Well, the key to understanding Romans 14 is recognizing the difference between personal dietary convictions and preferences compared to advocating in any way for ongoing universal, mandatory dietary restrictions, especially by twisting Peter’s vision of Acts chapter 10, the Apostolic conclusions of Acts chapter 15, or any of the rest of the Apostolic Scriptures.

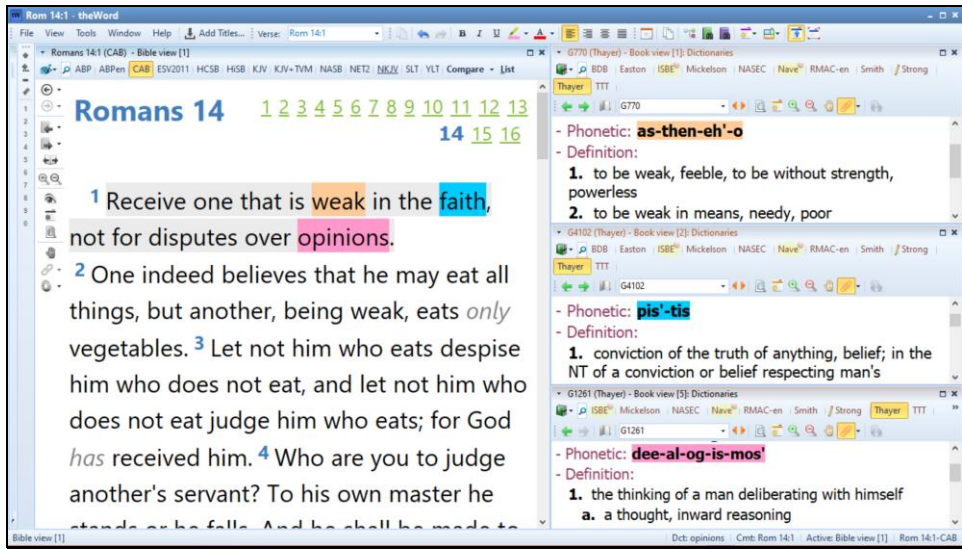
So, this is why Paul begins by saying: **Receive one that is weak in the faith, but not for disputes over opinions.** The entire chapter of Romans 14 is about receiving those who are **“weak in the faith”**

²⁸⁶ Ephesians 2:14-16

²⁸⁷ Ephesians 2:8-9

²⁸⁸ Hebrews 9:10

meaning: those who don't yet fully understand the differences between the New and Living Way and the Old Covenant, while not allowing them to dispute or argue with others, over their personal convictions.



Then Paul wrote about the key personal opinion a person in the church in Rome might desire to debate, saying: **For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables. Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him. Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.**²⁸⁹

Yes, food was (and is) the most common subject of controversy that those who are "**weak in the faith**" want to debate. And Paul explained that those who were "**weak in the faith**" restricted their diet, while those who were *not* weak in the faith, believed they could eat all things.

And with Paul's opening verse in mind that plainly stated that debates were not to be permitted, Paul explained that those with differing opinions in the Roman church should not judge each other over their dietary convictions.

Then, after discussing certain days of fasting that the Christians in Rome might have had differing opinions on, Paul stated: **Therefore**

²⁸⁹ Romans 14:2-4

let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way. I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. Yet if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died.²⁹⁰

So, first and foremost, Romans chapter 14 prohibits debating or judging other Christians over issues like food or fasting. And it also commands us not to intentionally try to cause a brother or sister to stumble by putting something they are convinced is unclean in their way. And this means that it would be very wrong to secretly serve fellow believer food that we know they would consider “unclean”.

Plus, it also means that the *loving* thing to do around a brother or sister who is still what Paul called “**weak in the faith**” is to make sure to openly declare any ingredients they might consider “unclean” to avoid causing them to do anything they might consider stumbling. But in the middle of that admonition, Paul inserts (with all of his Apostolic authority): **I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself.**²⁹¹ And the reality this declaration demonstrates is: Church leaders are to teach what Paul was convinced of by the LORD JESUS Himself, that “nothing is unclean of itself”.

And that is why Paul told Timothy: **Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus CHRIST.**²⁹²

²⁹⁰ Romans 14:13-15

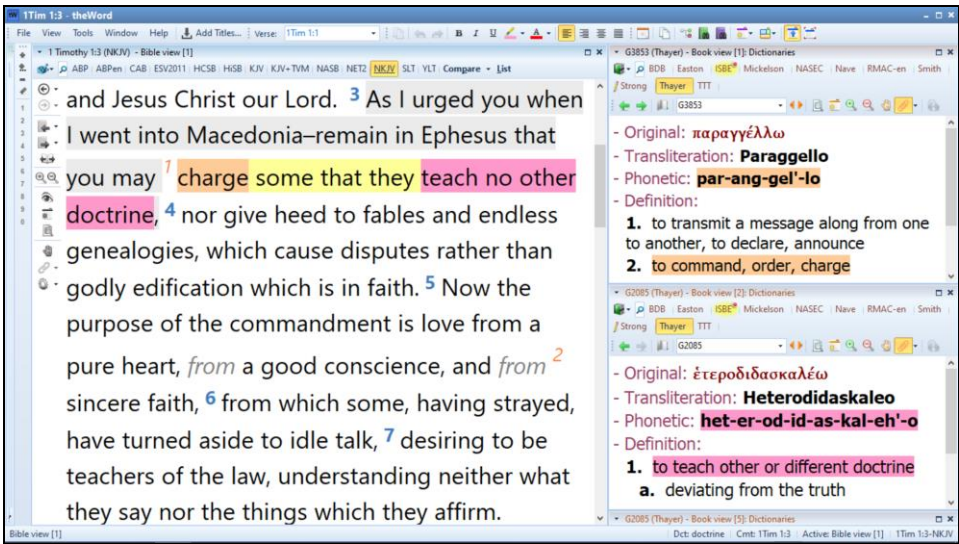
²⁹¹ Romans 14:14

²⁹² 1 Timothy 4:1-6

If an Elder wants to be a good servant of JESUS, he must teach: **“Every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving”**. So, while Romans chapter 14 instructs the church to receive those who are weak in the faith, Paul demonstrated and directly commanded that the Elders of the church must teach the truth about food so that no one will remain: **“weak in the faith”!**

And this means that Romans 14 is all about how we can each individually *practice love towards those who still see certain foods as unclean*, even while Church leaders follow Paul’s example and teach: **“Nothing is unclean of itself”, and: “Every creature of GOD is good, and nothing is to be refused”!**

However, if someone refuses to hear what the Apostolic Scriptures teach about food, the Elders must: **“charge ... that they teach no other doctrine”²⁹³!**

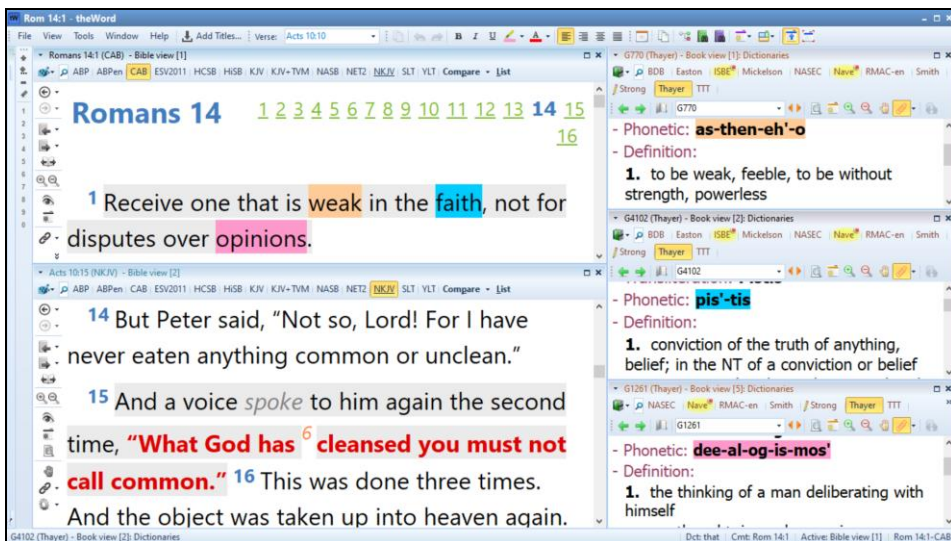


In fact, Paul even explained that the Bishop must be: **holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict. For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching**

²⁹³ 1 Timothy 1:3

things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest advantage.²⁹⁴

So, while we can receive one who is weak in the faith, we cannot allow them to contradict the literal, plain-sense, harmonious message of the Apostolic Scriptures, which is: **“What God has cleansed you must not call common.”**²⁹⁵



No, we must understand that we are purified **“by grace through faith”** in the New and Living Way, not by the works of the Levitical law!

Thus, through Paul, GOD has commanded: **Note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.**²⁹⁶ Therefore, this is what the Scriptures *really* teach about food debates, when we look to all of the Bible and the Bible alone!

²⁹⁴ Titus 1:9-11

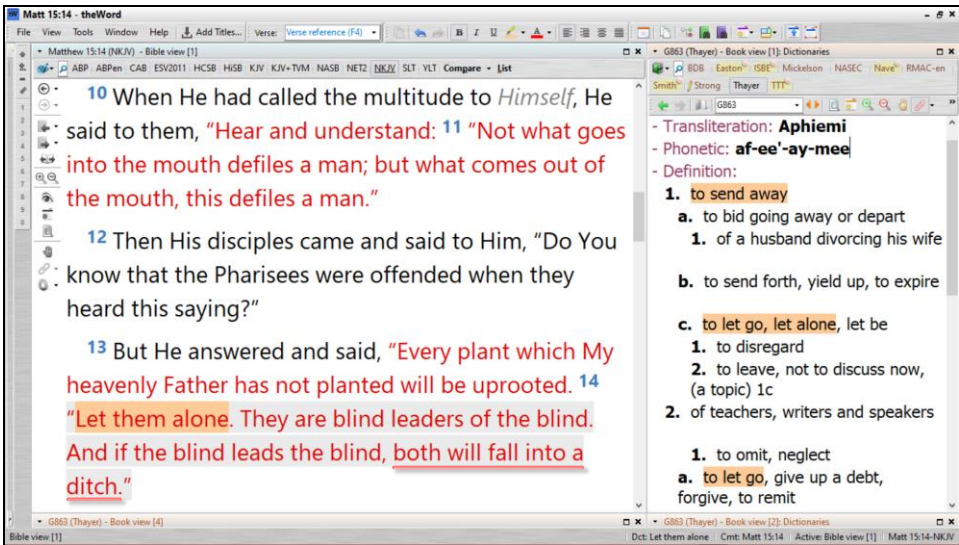
²⁹⁵ Acts 10:15

²⁹⁶ Romans 16:17

Chapter 8: Dangerous Demonic Doctrines

Recently, we have been reminded that The Apostle Paul wrote in his epistle to the church in Rome: **Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.**²⁹⁷ Scripture commands Christians to avoid people who contradict the divinely inspired doctrine that the Apostles recorded in the Bible. Meanwhile, this idea seems like a foreign concept to most modern Christians, so we need to take a deeper look at this verse and several others like it.

JESUS told us to “**send away**”²⁹⁸ those who contradict sound Biblical doctrine in word or deed, and Paul told us to “**avoid**” them. Yet, many Christians have been taught demonic ideas like “*unconditional love*”, “*tolerance of willful sin*”, “*moral relativism*”, or even the promotion of “*doctrinal diversity*”. Therefore, these devilish doctrines that have crept into the Church are seriously endangering the sheep of the LORD’s flock!



You see, in direct contrast to those anti-Christian ideas, the Apostle John warned: **Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone**

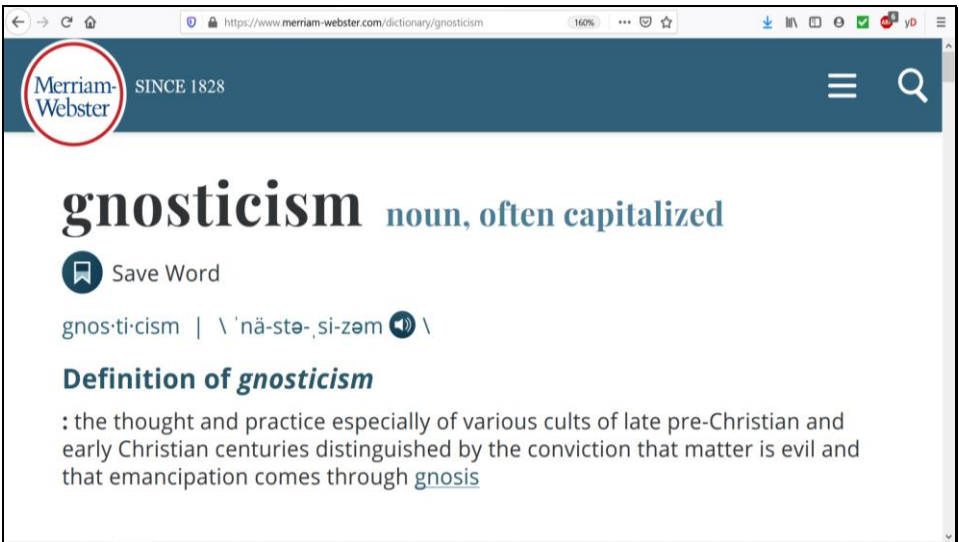
²⁹⁷ Romans 16:17

²⁹⁸ Matthew 15:14

comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.²⁹⁹

John prohibits fellowshiping with anyone who does not hold fast to the teachings of JESUS recorded by the Apostles and their contemporaries. He warned if such people come to you and you receive them into your home or even greet them *you partake in their evil deeds!* And this warning would apply to all who consistently teach things (or even knowingly live in ways) that are contrary to the doctrine of JESUS, or the Apostles He trained!

Meanwhile, the specific false teachers John was writing about in *this particular letter* have historically been called the “**Gnostics**”; a title based on the Greek word for “**knowledge**”.



So, about Gnostic teachings, John went on to explain: **For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward.**³⁰⁰

Some of the Gnostics taught that physical matter such as flesh and blood was evil, so people who mixed Gnosticism with faith in JESUS taught that JESUS only came to earth as a spirit. Therefore, contrary

²⁹⁹ 2 John 1:9-11

³⁰⁰ 2 John 1:7-8

to the testimony of the Apostles, Christian Gnostics insisted that our LORD did not have a physical body. So, after labeling those who taught that lie “antichrists” and “deceivers”, John said: Don’t receive or greet them, and **“look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for”**.

In the Bible, phrases like **“look to yourselves”**, **“beware”**, or **“take heed”** are warnings not to be caught up in a web of lies like Eve was in the garden! So, JESUS, Paul, John, and many others warn us to avoid those who contradict the teachings of the Bible because we can be sucked down into the deception that has taken them captive! Yes, the truth is, capturing souls with false doctrines is the dark motivation behind demons openly contradicting the doctrine of our LORD and His Apostles within His church! And those who repeat such doctrines must be **“sent away”** and **“avoided”**.

When John warned in his second epistle to: **“look to yourselves”**³⁰¹, in context it is clear that he was saying *“watch out for your souls by shunning or avoiding all who teach false doctrine”*. And he indicated that we must do this so that we will not be taken captive by their deceptions, and led away from the faith.

In the same way, Paul warned the elders of Ephesus: **“Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”**³⁰²

Then Paul explained: **“For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves, men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn every one night and day with tears.”**³⁰³

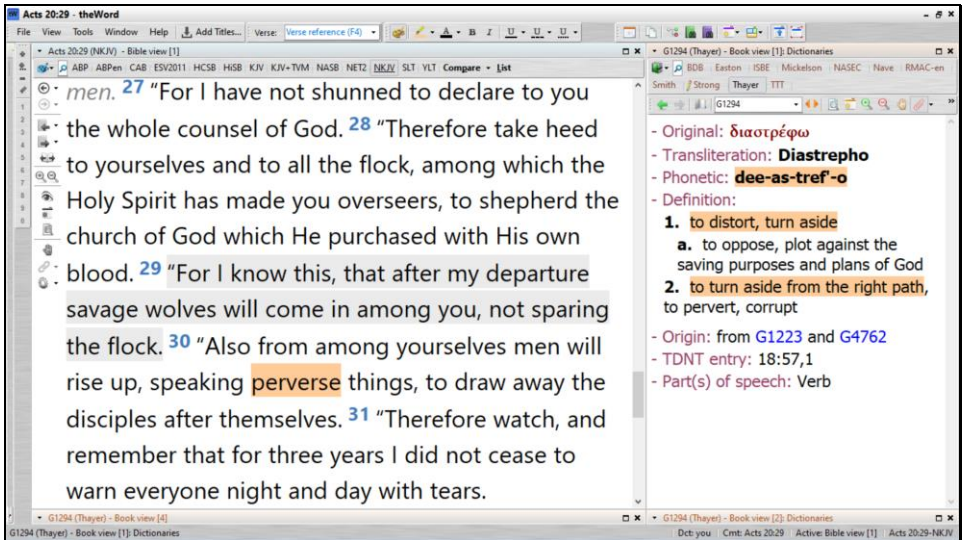
The word Paul used, which was translated here as **“perverse”** means: **“to speak distorted, twisted, and misleading things that turn people away from the true path”**. So, because Paul knew that people would be **“rising up”** in the church to speak *distorted, twisted, and misleading things*, he earnestly warned everyone night and day (for

³⁰¹ 2 John 1:7-8

³⁰² Acts 20:28

³⁰³ Acts 20:29-31

three whole years, even while weeping) to watch out for themselves, and turn away from those who twist GOD's Word!



Truly, John and Paul understood exactly what JESUS was saying when He warned: **“Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit.”**³⁰⁴

The fact is, whenever people **“rise up”** in the church **“speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after themselves”**, *as soon as the disciples start avoiding them in obedience to JESUS and His Apostles*, they leave!

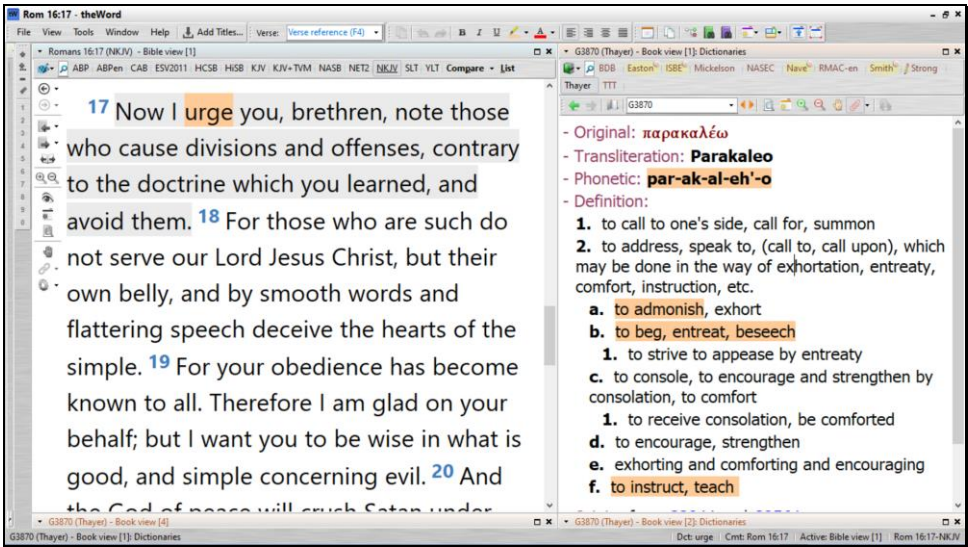
But this leads us back to Paul's instructions, which plainly stated: **Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.**³⁰⁵

The word Paul used which was translated here as: **“urge”** is **par-ak-al-eh'-o**. Now this Greek verb means: **“to instruct, to admonish, to plead with, or to entreat.”** And, because Paul knew that false doctrine can shipwreck a Christian's faith³⁰⁶, he pleaded that we note and avoid anyone who fits this description.

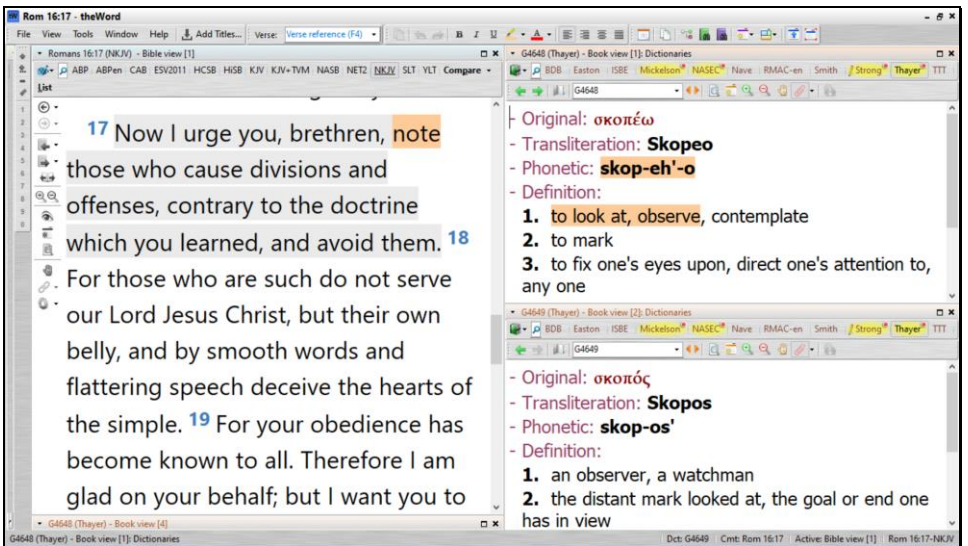
³⁰⁴ Matthew 15:14

³⁰⁵ Romans 16:17

³⁰⁶ 1 Timothy 1:19



Meanwhile, the verb translated here as “**note**” is **skop-eh'-o**, and we get our modern word scope from the Greek root of this word. So, this should help us remember that it means: “**to fix one's eyes upon**”, or “**to observe carefully**” as if to examine from a distance.



When we notice someone who might be sowing division in the body of CHRIST (which is the Church³⁰⁷), we first need to take a step back from them to carefully observe them from a distance. Then we can

³⁰⁷ Colossians 1:24

examine or “**scope out**” if they are contradicting the doctrine of JESUS or His Apostles!

By the way, the word Paul used, which is translated here as “**divisions**” is **dee-khos-tas-ee'-ah**. And this Greek noun means: “**dissent and division**” because it is made up of two smaller words that indicate: “**a group being divided into two or more factions that have taken their stand on differing sides of some issue**”.

The screenshot shows a Bible software interface with the following content:

Rom 16:17 - theWord

Romans 16:17 (NKJV) - Bible view [1]

17 Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause **divisions** and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. 18 For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ. but their own

G1370 (Thayer) - Book view [1]: Dictionaries

- Transliteration: **Dichostasia**
- Phonetic: **dee-khos-tas-ee'-ah**
- Definition:
 1. **dissension, division**
- Origin: from a derivative of **G1364** and **G4714**
- TDNT entry: 09:34,9
- Part(s) of speech: Noun Feminine

G4714 (Thayer) - Book view [2]: Dictionaries

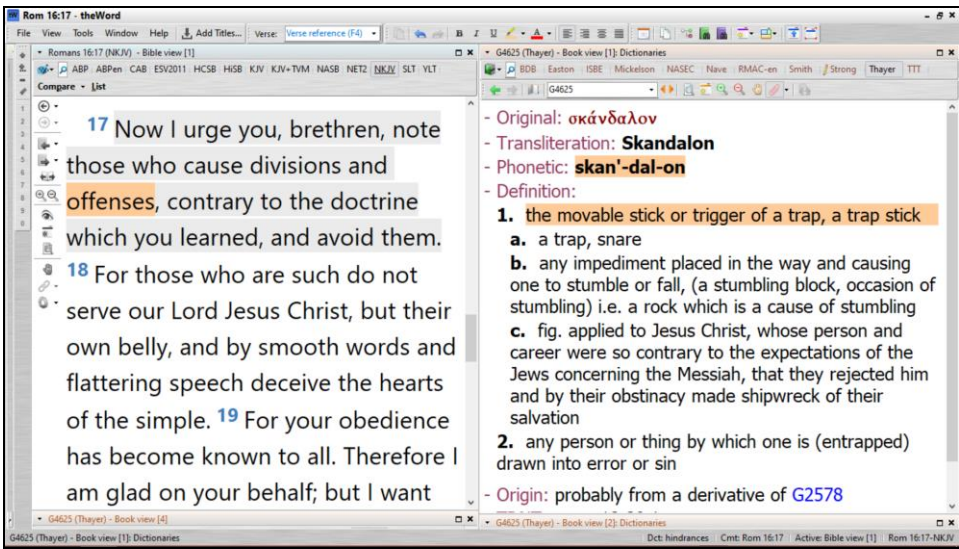
- Original: **στάσις**
- Transliteration: **Stasis**
- Phonetic: **stas'-is**
- Definition:
 1. **a standing**, station, state
 2. **an insurrection**
 3. **strife, insurrection**

G1364 (Thayer) - Book view [4]

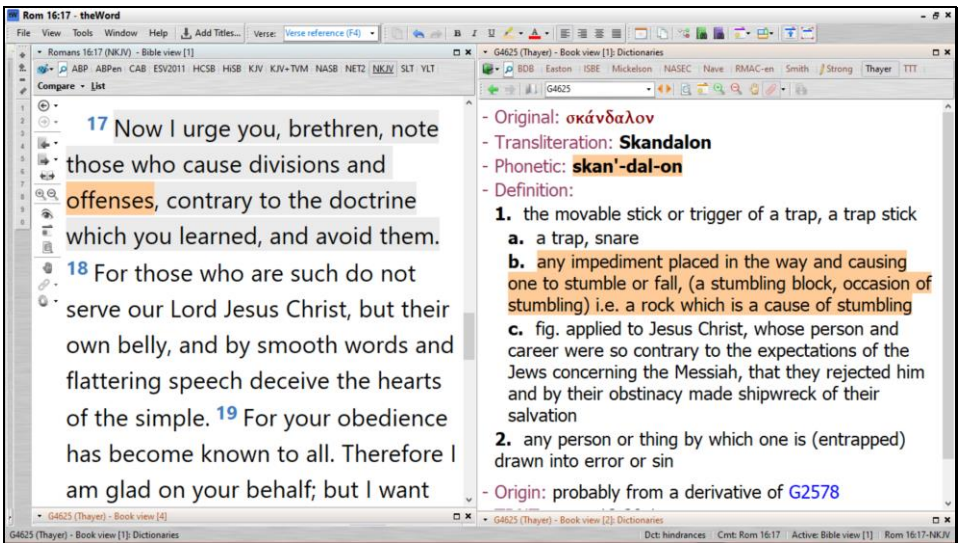
- Original: **δίς**
- Transliteration: **Dis**
- Phonetic: **dece**
- Definition:
 1. **twice**

Therefore, when disagreements arise in the body of CHRIST, we need to determine which position aligns with the position of JESUS and His Apostles by carefully comparing all sides to the Word of GOD. Then we need to determine which positions are deviating from the faith that was once and for all delivered to the saints within the Holy Scriptures.

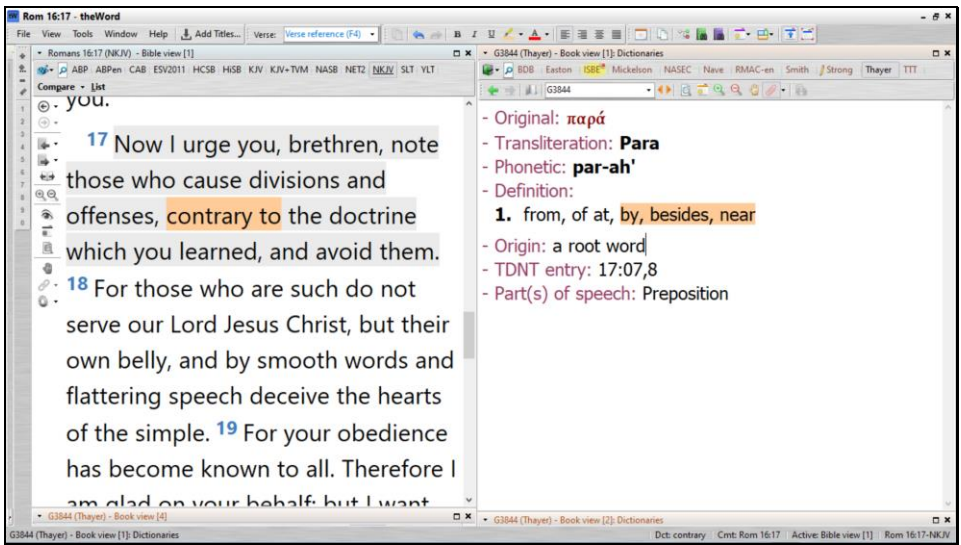
Next, this leads us to the word here translated as “**offenses**”. But the Greek noun behind that English word is “**skan'-dal-on**”; a term that originally referred to “**the movable stick or trigger of a trap, or a trap stick**”



But later, this same word that we get the term “**scandal**” from, was used to refer to “**any impediment placed in the way - causing one to stumble or fall**”, such as a stumbling block or a stumbling stone.



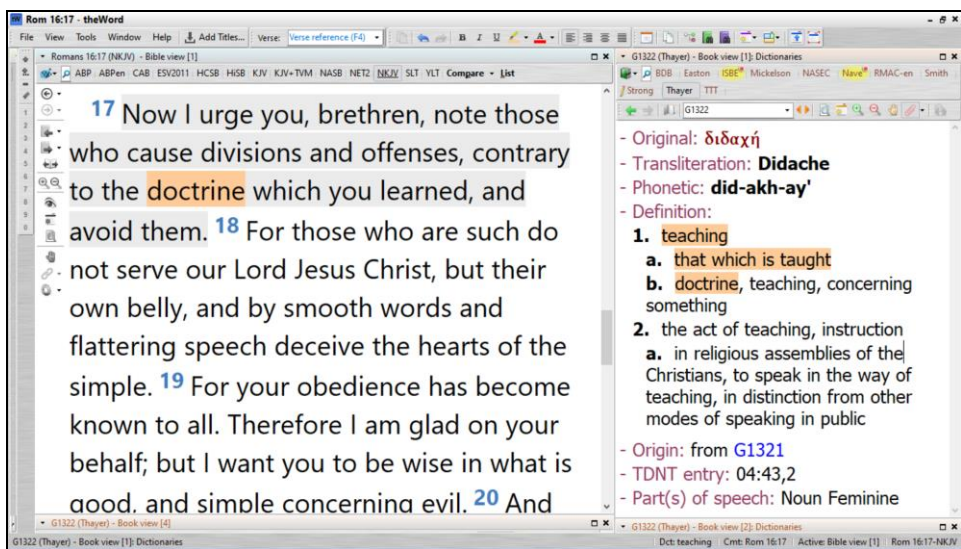
However, what did Paul mean when he used this word translated here as: “**contrary to**”? Well, the Greek preposition behind those English words is **par-ah'** and it means: “**by, besides, or near**”.



So, Paul is indicating that we need to place the doctrine of JESUS and His Apostles *next to or beside* the doctrine of those on the various sides of every doctrinal issue³⁰⁸ to determine which side is presenting a trap, and which side is presenting the truth!

Now, this leads us to the keyword in these instructions and many of the passages we have considered, which is the term: “**doctrine**”! And the Greek noun behind that English word is **did-akh-ay**, which means: “**teaching or instruction**” or more specifically: “**that which has been taught**”.

³⁰⁸ 1 Thessalonians 5:21



We must recognize that while it has become fashionable in today's anti-truth, relativistic culture to downplay **doctrine** in the church, Paul wrote to Timothy: **Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.**³⁰⁹

Just as John warned that those who don't remain in the **doctrine** of JESUS do not have GOD, Paul explained that Timothy could save *himself and many others* by taking careful heed to himself and the **doctrine** he was taught! So, we must never think for a moment that **doctrine** is not important to the Christian!

After all, John was writing about **doctrine**, when he recorded: **From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?" But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."**³¹⁰

Likewise, JESUS was speaking about **doctrine** when He said: **"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me."**³¹¹

³⁰⁹ 1 Timothy 4:16

³¹⁰ John 6:66-68

³¹¹ John 14:23-24

Truly, when JESUS said: “**he will keep My word**”, He meant that we must know what JESUS taught, we must believe what JESUS taught, and we must obey what JESUS taught; just as we “**keep His commandments**” by knowing, believing, and obeying them! Therefore, Christian doctrine is useless if we don’t obey it!

But we won’t obey what we don’t believe! And that is why false doctrine is like a trap or a stumbling stone because it leads us away from believing and knowing the truth! Therefore, because false doctrine can cause people to shipwreck their faith, we must, literally: **turn away from, avoid, or shun** those who won’t repent of teaching it!³¹²

Thus, the idea behind Paul’s command in Romans 16:17 is to examine the words of those who are creating division in the church. Search the Scriptures to determine if they are teaching anything contrary to the doctrine of JESUS and His Apostles. Carefully identify the trap or stumbling stone they have placed in the path of the church, and then **avoid them** if they won’t repent. Thereby protecting the church and ourselves from the deadly deception they have been taken captive by.

But now that we fully understand that passage, we should next explain that the Scriptures warn that certain doctrines originated in the minds of demonic fallen angels who desire to deceive and destroy! These despicable demons invented their doctrines to take people captive with them to hell. They frequently smuggle their agents of demonic doctrine into GOD’s church to steal away disciples after themselves! And Paul specifically warned Timothy about two different doctrines invented by demons that we must carefully avoid.

Paul warned Timothy, a fellow leader in the Church: **Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good**

³¹² 2 Peter 2:1a

minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed.³¹³

The HOLY SPIRIT confidently revealed to Paul that some Christians would leave the true Christian faith behind at some time in the future relative to the time when Paul wrote to Timothy. And the SPIRIT revealed that this would happen because certain people were going to give heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.

Now, here we should note that demons are unclean spirits³¹⁴, and more specifically, they are fallen angels who convince pagans that they are gods! Therefore, the term “**demon**” is an English transliteration of a Greek word that means: “**a god, a goddess, an inferior deity, or an evil spirit**”.³¹⁵ Therefore, every so-called “god” that is not the GOD of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is a demon, posing as the one true GOD to lure people into sin!³¹⁶

But please notice that Paul used the plural form of the Greek noun “**did-as-kal-ee'-ah**”, so translators used the plural form of the word “**doctrine**” by adding the letter “**s**” to the end of the word. And this is important because it means: the two doctrines Paul listed in this passage are two separate doctrines of demons and they do not have to be taught together to be classified as “**demonic**” doctrine.

³¹³ 1 Timothy 4:1-6

³¹⁴ Luke 4:33-36

³¹⁵ <https://studybible.info/strongs/G1142>

³¹⁶ 1 Corinthians 10:20

Reference	Greek Text	English Translation	Grammatical Information
5100 [e]	τινες tines	some	IPro-NMP
3588 [e]	τῆς tés	the	Art-GFS
4102 [e]	πίστεως, pisteōs	faith,	N-GFS
4337 [e]	προσέχοντες prosechontes	giving heed	V-PPA-NMP
4151 [e]	πνεύμασιν pneumasin	to spirits	N-DNP
4108 [e]	πλάνοις planois	deceitful	Adj-DNP
2532 [e]	καὶ kai	and	Conj
1319 [e]	διδασκαλίας didaskalias	teachings	N-GFS
1140 [e]	δαιμονίων, daimoniōn	of demons,	Noun - Dative Feminine Plural

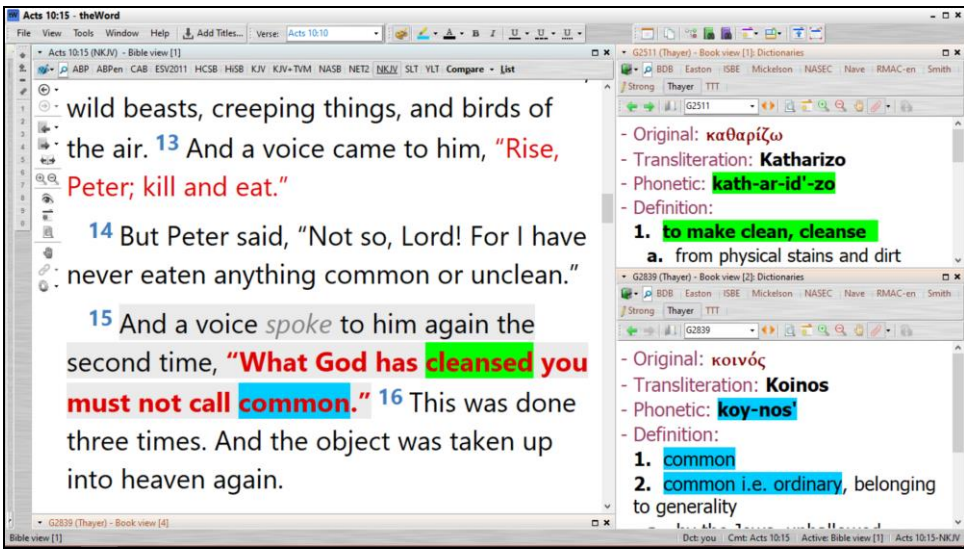
So, the first demonic doctrine Paul listed had to do with **“forbidding people to marry”**. And the second, separate demonic doctrine Paul listed had to do with **“commanding people to abstain from foods that GOD created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.”**

Then Paul explains that the *second* doctrine is demonic because: **“every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving”**³¹⁷. So, this second demonic doctrine specifically contradicts the heavenly vision GOD sent to Peter in Acts chapter 10 that declared all foods **“clean”**.

Demons desire to contradict the Word of the LORD that said: **“What God has cleansed you must not call common.”**³¹⁸ because they want to lead people into sin by convincing them to continue calling what GOD has cleansed, **“common”** and **“unclean”**!

³¹⁷ 1 Timothy 4:4

³¹⁸ Acts 10:15

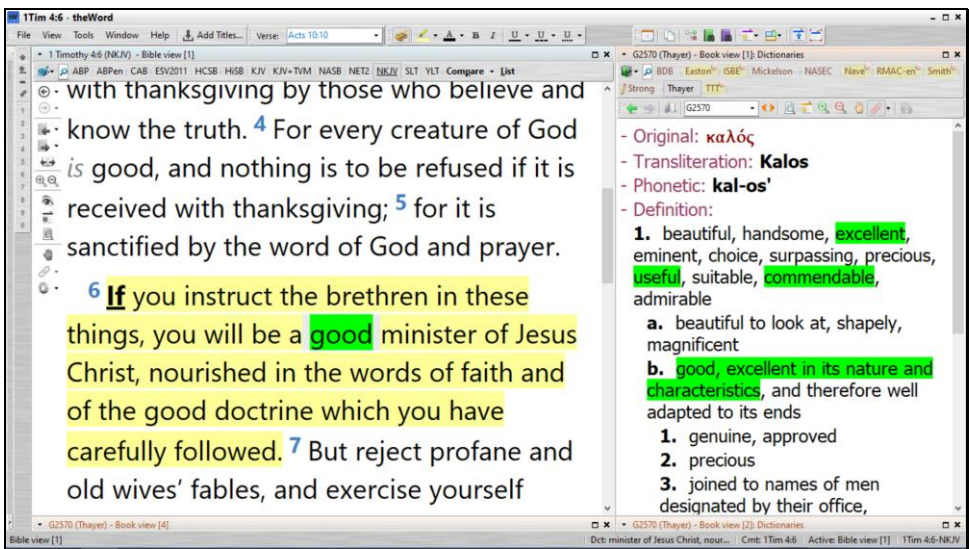


After all, sin is simply a violation of GOD's law! And, since man must live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of GOD, it is a sin to ignore the commands of Acts chapter 10!

This is why translators use the English word "if", to form a conditional phrase when they express that Paul wrote to Timothy: "***If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of JESUS CHRIST***".³¹⁹

So, Scripture teaches through this conditional phrase: if Timothy (or the church Elders who came after him) did not teach that "***every creature of GOD is good and nothing is to be refused***", they would not be "***good ministers of JESUS CHRIST***"!

³¹⁹ 1 Timothy 4:6



But I should explain here, that: those who wrongly teach: “*Peter’s vision in Acts chapter 10 had nothing to do with food*” will try to force those who believe and know the truth about food to consider both of those doctrines of demons Paul wrote about as *one single doctrine*. And they might say: “*Since food and marriage are not connected in our teachings, this passage has nothing to do with our beliefs*”.

For this reason, it is critical to recognize that Paul used the *plural* form of the word “**doctrines**” before he listed two separate doctrines of demons! And, since their teachings perfectly match the second doctrine of demons and contradict Paul’s statement that “**every creature of GOD is good and nothing is to be refused**”, any time after GOD announced that He cleansed those foods, those who contradict Peter’s vision are teaching something that began in the mind of a fallen angel.

1 Timothy	4:1	Version	Commentary	Language
5100 [e]	ΤΙΤΕΣ tites	some		IPro-NMP
3588 [e]	τῆς tés	the		Art-GFS
4102 [e]	πίστεως, pistéōs	faith,		N-GFS
4337 [e]	προσέχοντες prosechontes	giving heed		V-PPA-NMP
4151 [e]	πνεύμασιν pneumasin	to spirits		N-DNP
4108 [e]	πλάνοις planōis	deceitful		Adj-DNP
2532 [e]	καὶ kai	and		Conj
1319 [e]	διδασκαλίαις didaskaliāis	teachings		Noun - Dative Feminine Plural
1140 [e]	δαίμονίων, daimonion	of demons,		N-GNP

But, why would a fallen angel want to teach Christians to ignore Peter’s vision and GOD’s command to stop calling certain foods common or unclean by teaching something from the Old Covenant? Well, the answer is: if they can keep people under the “tutoring aspects” of the First Covenant, they can keep them from the grace of the New Covenant!³²⁰

And this is why Scripture explains: **Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage. Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law. You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.**³²¹

Turning back to the cleansing laws of the Levitical Priesthood that were “**concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances**”³²² (like circumcision) for justification or sanctification, excludes a person from the grace of JESUS and His cross.

³²⁰ Galatians 3:2-3

³²¹ Galatians 5:1-4

³²² Hebrews 9:10

But because “*attempting to be justified by the works of the law performed in the flesh*” was so common in the First Century, Paul also wrote: **That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith; but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. Why? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone. As it is written: “Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense, and whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.”**³²³

Brothers and Sisters the cross of JESUS our LORD is actually “**a stumbling stone**” to anyone who refuses to see that a New Covenant was necessary to forever open the veil into the Holiest of All! And with that fact in mind, here we should note that this passage in Romans chapter 9, comes from two separate passages from Isaiah, combined into one.

Half of the quote comes from Isaiah chapter 8, where it is written: **Sanctify the Lord of Hosts; and He shall be your fear. Indeed, if you are trusting in Him, He shall be to you for a sanctuary; and you shall not come against Him as against a stumbling stone, neither as against a rock of offense; but the houses of Jacob are in a snare, and those who dwell in Jerusalem are in a pit. Therefore, many among them shall be weak and fall, and be crushed.**³²⁴

And the other half of the quote comes from Isaiah chapter 28, where it is written: **“Behold, I shall lay as the foundation of Zion a chief cornerstone, chosen and precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.”**³²⁵

First, we see that the central thread in all three of these passages is JESUS our MESSIAH! But another key thread in these verses is the Greek word for “**faith**”, which is directly connected in the Greek language to the words we translate as “**trusting**” and “**belief**”.

You see, the Greek word “**pi'-tho**” means: “**to persuade**”. And “**pi'-tho**” is the root of the Greek word for “**faith**”, which is: “**pis'-tis**”.

³²³ Romans 9:30-33

³²⁴ Isaiah 8:13-15a LXX

³²⁵ Isaiah 28:16, 1 Peter 2:6

of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. ³² Why? Because *they did* not seek it by **faith**, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone. ³³ As it is written:

“Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense, And whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.”

- Original: **πίστις**
 - Transliteration: **Pistis**
 - Phonetic: **pis'-tis**
 - Definition:
 1. **conviction of the truth of anything**, belief; in the NT of a conviction or belief respecting man's relationship to God and divine things, generally with the included idea of trust and holy fervour born of faith and joined with it

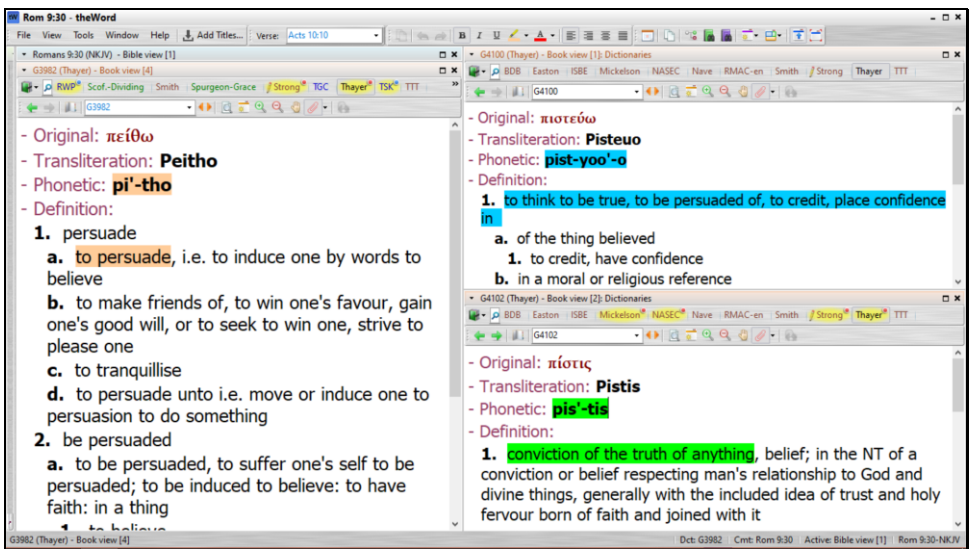
But “**pis'-tis**”, which is “**the conviction of the truth of something**”, is the root of the Greek word for “**believing**” or “**trusting**” which is: “**pist-yoo'-o**”.

of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. ³² Why? Because *they did* not seek it by **faith**, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone. ³³ As it is written:

“Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense, And whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.”

- Original: **πιστεύω**
 - Transliteration: **Pisteuo**
 - Phonetic: **pist-yoo'-o**
 - Definition:
 1. **to think to be true, to be persuaded of, to credit, place confidence in**
 a. of the thing believed
 1. to credit, have confidence
 b. in a moral or religious reference

Therefore, in the Bible, “**believing**” or “**trusting**” are the verb forms of the noun “**faith**”, and all of them point back to the root word “**pi'-tho**”, which means: “**to persuade**”.



So, having faith in JESUS, believing in JESUS, and trusting in JESUS are all connected within the language of Scripture! And those who are persuaded to obediently believe in JESUS: will not be put to shame! Instead, they will find Him to be their sanctuary, and they will not stumble over Him as one “stumbles over a stumbling stone”.

Romans 9:32-33	Isaiah 8:13-15a	Isaiah 28:16
<p>Why? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone. As it is written: “Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense, And whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.”</p>	<p>Sanctify the Lord of Hosts; and He shall be your fear. Indeed, if you are trusting in Him, He shall be to you for a sanctuary; and you shall not come against Him as against a stumbling stone, neither as against a rock of offense; but the houses of Jacob are in a snare, and those who dwell in Jerusalem are in a pit. Therefore, many among them shall be weak and fall, and be crushed.</p>	<p>Behold, I shall lay as the foundation of Zion a chief cornerstone, chosen and precious, and he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame</p>

But, for most of the Jews of the First Century, the opposite of putting their faith in JESUS CHRIST was putting their faith in the “**foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances**” of the law”!

Therefore, Paul explains: **“that Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law.”**³²⁶

So, we must understand that JESUS was teaching how the First Covenant could not truly cleanse anyone enough for them to enter GOD’s presence when He said: **“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”**³²⁷ Friends this was a radical thing to say to people who believed that they could come to GOD through the Levitical priesthood!

So, because JESUS knew that *many* would refuse to see that **He** was the only way to the Father, He once warned the Pharisees (and all who think like them): **Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you—Moses, in whom you trust.**³²⁸

Sadly, many Christians in these last days have fallen from GOD’s grace because they have listened to false teachers who are proclaiming the doctrines of demons! And these deceived Pharisees are preaching the Galatian heresy when they put Christians back under the: **“foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances”** of the *Levitical priesthood* by twisting the plain words of JESUS and His Apostles about those things!

But when these poor, misled souls turn back to the works of the Levitical Law for their righteousness, not only does the veil to the holy of Holies close to them, the veil then covers their eyes and makes them blind, *even* to the words of Moses.

About this tragic situation, Paul wrote: **Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech— unlike Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away. But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Covenant because the veil is taken away in Christ. But even to this day, when Moses is read, a**

³²⁶ Romans 9:30-33

³²⁷ John 14:6

³²⁸ John 5:45

veil lies on their heart. Nevertheless, when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.³²⁹

Only by turning to JESUS to receive the righteousness that comes by faith in Him can we truly see the cleansing aspects of the Old Covenant correctly, as a tutor that led us to the MESSIAH³³⁰! And JESUS not only opens the veil to the Holy of Holies so we can boldly approach GOD's throne; He also takes away the veil that lies over the heart of every person who had put their trust in the fleshly works of the Law for their righteousness, instead of trusting in JESUS CHRIST!

We can easily tell when someone still has a closed veil blinding their eyes when they continue to treat the food laws of Leviticus 11 as a moral issue despite what JESUS³³¹ and His Apostles taught!

And based on that test, it is clear that the spiritual blindness of the Pharisees has been passed down to all of their blind followers! Sadly, even after Peter's vision has been recorded for all of the world to read, many modern-day Pharisees still blindly teach the doctrine of demons that contradict the statement: **"Every creature of GOD is good and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving"**.³³²

But now we should ask: How did these blind followers of the blind Pharisees become so spiritually blinded, even to the point that they cannot see the obvious meaning of Peter's vision, the decision of the Apostles in Acts 15, the clear writings of the Apostles about food, or even what JESUS taught about what goes into our mouths?

Well, the sure suspects in "the case of the blinded disciples" are the **"deceiving spirits"** Paul mentioned in his written warning to Timothy!

Please remember, Paul recorded that those who would **"depart from the faith"** would be: **"...giving heed to deceiving spirits"** And *the deceptive, demonic spirits* are the ones who **"speak lies in hypocrisy"** to lead disciples away from the faith!

Therefore, Scripture warns us: **Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false**

³²⁹ 2 Corinthians 3:12-16

³³⁰ Galatians 3:23-25

³³¹ Mark 7:14-16

³³² 1 Timothy 4:4

prophets have gone out into the world.³³³ Just because we hear a still small voice inside that tells us something is true, that does not mean that we must trust that voice without testing it!

Likewise, just because a prophet claims that they heard a spirit speak to them, we don't have to listen to that prophet without testing them! No, Paul wrote: **Let two or three prophets speak and let the others judge.**³³⁴

Therefore, we are commanded to test the messages of the prophets and the spirits to see if they are true! And we learned earlier how we must test all things, and that is: by comparing all things side by side to the doctrine of JESUS and His Apostles!³³⁵

And because all truly sound and trustworthy doctrine is recorded in the Holy Scriptures, Paul wrote: **All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.**³³⁶

So, we must remember, **Scripture** is how GOD has “**thoroughly equipped**” us for “**every good work**”! And, the only thing we cannot challenge as disciples of JESUS is The Word of GOD! But we can challenge the spirits (and even all extra-biblical prophets) by comparing all they say to the sufficient, inspired, infallible, words of the Holy Bible!

Therefore, when we test the doctrine of demons that contradicts the voice from Heaven that Peter called “LORD”, we see that “**Every creature of GOD is good and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving**”.³³⁷

But beyond the deception that comes from the demonic realm that blinds those who embrace demonic doctrine, there is a second source of spiritual blindness within all those who “**depart from the faith**” to

³³³ 1 John 4:1

³³⁴ 1 Corinthians 14:29

³³⁵ 1 Thessalonians 5:21

³³⁶ 2 Timothy 3:16-17

³³⁷ 1 Timothy 4:4

accept the lie that Peter's vision had nothing to do with food! And that second, very serious problem is "**self-deception**"!³³⁸

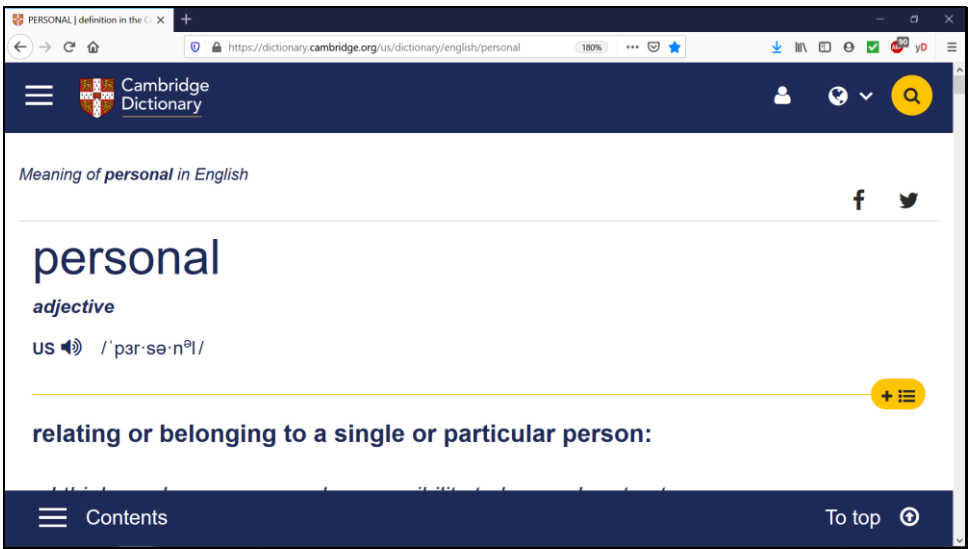
You see, a lie only harms the people who *choose* to believe it! So, if someone incorrectly told you today that the Levitical laws concerning foods, drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances were still mandatory for all disciples of JESUS, you would have to **choose** to ignore the plain meaning of Mark 7, Acts 10, Acts 11, Acts 15, Acts 21, Galatians, Romans, Philippians, Colossians, and many other passages of the Bible, to believe that false statement!

Yes, the second doctrine of demons that commands people to abstain from foods that GOD has declared "cleansed", cannot take root in a heart that allows all of those passages we just mentioned to speak literally, as they were written! So, first: a demon had to *choose* to teach the lie that we must still abstain from certain foods, but second: the hearer had to *choose* to believe it.

Then, because spiritual deception and self-deception both tend to corrupt a person's thinking and lead them into logical fallacies (which are errors in sound reasoning), a self-deceived person who has *chosen* to believe the second doctrine of demons Paul listed *might* fallaciously state that somehow their beliefs about food, and Peter's vision, are only what they choose to call: "**personal convictions**". And they might hide behind that fallacious claim while trying to lead others astray.

So, in an attempt to help such a person escape from the snare of the devil, and to protect others from such flawed logic, we can lovingly explain: the Cambridge Dictionary defines the word "**personal**" as: "**relating or belonging to a single or particular person**". Therefore, by definition: "**personal**" convictions don't apply to anyone other than *the person who has them*.

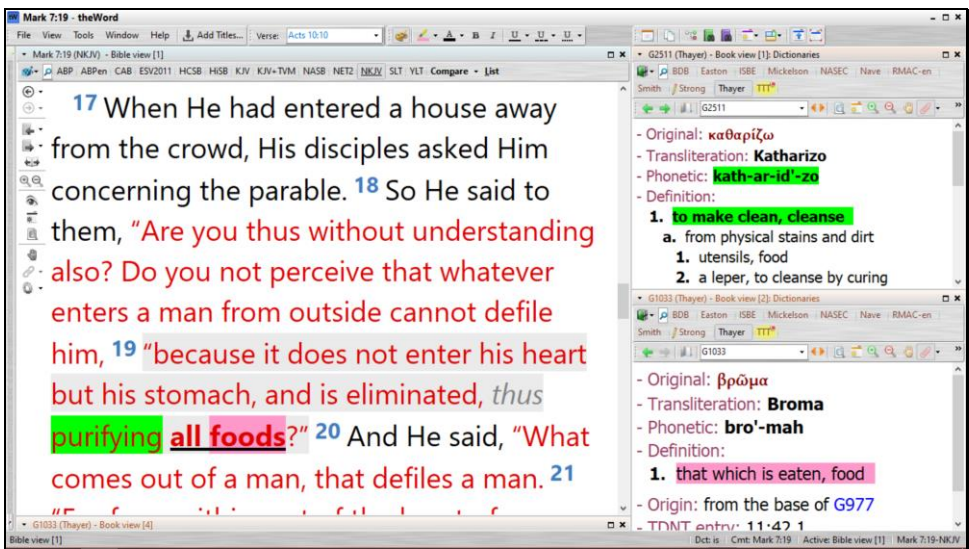
³³⁸ 2 Timothy 3:13



Therefore, a true “*personal conviction*” would never cause anyone to be offended by others reading passages of the Bible like Acts chapter 10 in a literal manner! A true “**personal conviction**” should have nothing to do with how the Bible is read in any way, since the Bible applies to all Christians everywhere, but a “**personal conviction**” only applies to the person who has such a conviction!

Therefore, a true “**personal conviction**” would never take an exchange between Peter and a voice from heaven about “**killing and eating**” animals that were formerly considered: “**unclean**”, and twist it into a passage that has “**nothing to do with food**”!

A personal conviction would never twist the words of JESUS that plainly indicate He was discussing the cleansing of “**all foods**” and falsely claim: “**He was not speaking about ‘all foods’**”!



A personal conviction would never add the word “clean” to the sentence: **“Every creature of GOD is good and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving”**.

And, a personal conviction can’t explain away Paul’s statement that declared: **“I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself...”**³³⁹

No, we can’t allow anyone who might do these things to the Bible (or those who try to teach others to do the same thing) to claim that the discord they are sowing is only them holding to their: **“personal convictions”**!

We must not allow such self-deception to spread in the Church, because personal convictions only apply to the person who has them! Meanwhile, the demonic misinterpretations we just discussed would force every Christian to understand the Bible in a way that contradicts what has been written and amazingly preserved for nearly two thousand years!

Thus, the truth is: if someone claims their “personal” conviction affects the way other Christians should read, teach, or understand the Bible, or even eat; then (by definition) they are not talking about a “personal conviction”!

³³⁹ Romans 14:14a

When we accurately speak of “personal convictions”, we are speaking of convictions that exclusively guide our private thinking and actions! But if they are really “personal convictions” they should never have any impact on how other people think or act!

Also, a true “personal conviction” cannot be a “moral conviction”, because it would automatically label others who don’t share it, “immoral”!

Likewise, a true “personal conviction” cannot be a “doctrinal conviction”, because it would automatically label others who don’t follow the same doctrine: “wrong”.

Thus, *real personal convictions* cannot condemn how other people read GOD’s Word! They never allow us to judge others over food. They don’t allow us to contradict the heavenly vision GOD sent to Peter. And no conviction can qualify as a “personal conviction” if it results in us doing any of these things!

But above all else, please understand that the things we have studied together about “The Continuity Debate” would never offend someone who only had “personal convictions” about food! No, it seems logical to conclude that our studies would have only offended those who wanted others to see the Scriptures in the same way that *they* saw them!

And with that understood, we must now mention: Scripture commands us not to add or take away from the Bible³⁴⁰, or go beyond what is written³⁴¹! So, even if someone claims that an angel of GOD told them: *“the plain sense reading of all that the Apostolic Scriptures teach regarding food is not to be taken literally”*, then we can know for certain, they are not hearing from the GOD of Peter, Paul, and John!

And this is why Paul warned: **But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.**³⁴²

³⁴⁰ Proverbs 30:5-6

³⁴¹ 1 Corinthians 4:6

³⁴² Galatians 1:8-9

So, I hope that we can all see that fallen angels teach deceptive doctrines about food! And this is true because demons desire to divert the disciples of JESUS away from **the** faith that was once and for all delivered to the saints!

Meanwhile, they cannot do this evil thing without twisting or discarding most of what our LORD's Apostles had to say about food in the progressively revealed Word of GOD!

And now we see that the answer to the Continuity Debate is, the Levitical System that was **“concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation”**³⁴³ was replaced when the Lion of the Tribe of Judah became our eternal High Priest by the offering of Himself on the cross! So, while recognizing those minor items of discontinuity, we can hold fast to all of the Bible and the Bible alone!

³⁴³ Hebrews 9:10