

OPEN YOUR BIBLE

Study Companion

What Did Peter’s Vision Actually Mean?

Acts 10:1–48, Clean and Unclean Animals, Cornelius, Gentiles—and the Vision Everyone Uses to Talk About Food

A printable companion for reading Acts 10 and Acts 11 as one unfolding story: Cornelius, Peter’s vision, the Greek purity vocabulary, Peter’s own interpretation, the Spirit’s outpouring, and the two strongest readings of the animal imagery.

Use this packet with your Bible open. Trace the sequence before choosing a conclusion, and keep TEXT separate from INFERENCE when you decide what Peter’s vision can and cannot prove.

Before You Begin

Use this Companion with Acts 10 and Acts 11 open. Do not begin with the question “Can Christians eat pork?” Begin with Luke’s story. Trace the sequence, Peter’s vocabulary, Peter’s own explanation, and the Jerusalem believers’ conclusion before deciding what the vision can and cannot prove.

PASSAGE-STUDY RULE

Before we build doctrine from the animals in the sheet, read the whole story. Then read Peter’s own explanation. Then ask what the text proves and what still requires inference.

My current interpretation of Acts 10 is:

Map the Narrative

Movement	What Happens	What Question It Raises
Cornelius	Angel tells him to send for Peter	Why begin with a Gentile before Peter’s vision?
Peter	Hungry, praying, trance, sheet descends	Why food imagery?
Vision	Kill and eat; Peter refuses; God has cleansed	What exactly is being cleansed?
After vision	Peter is perplexed	Was the meaning immediately obvious?
Messengers	Spirit says go without hesitation	How does this connect to the vision?
Cornelius’s house	Peter enters and explains	What does Peter say God showed him?
Sermon	Peter proclaims Yeshua	What is the gospel center of the story?
Spirit falls	Gentiles receive Spirit	What surprises the Jewish believers?

Acts 11	Peter retells events	How does Jerusalem interpret the result?
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Read Acts 10:9–16 Closely

What kinds of creatures does Peter see?

What command does he hear?

What is his objection?

What is the heavenly response?

How many times does the exchange occur?

Vocabulary

Greek	Transliteration	Basic Range	Question
κοινός	koinos	common/shared; sometimes profane/defiled	Is “common” identical to “unclean”?
ἀκάθαρτος	akathartos	unclean/impure	What biblical purity category does Peter invoke?
καθαρίζω	katharizō	cleanse/purify	What has God cleansed in the vision/story?
κοινώω	koinoō	make/regard as common	What must Peter stop classifying this way?
ἀθέμιτος	athemitos	improper/taboo/not permitted	Is Peter citing a direct Torah command or a received social boundary?

Peter Is Perplexed

Read Acts 10:17–23.

What does verse 17 say Peter is doing after the vision?

Who arrives while he is pondering?

What does the Spirit tell Peter to do?

Peter Interprets Peter

Read Acts 10:24–29.

Complete Peter’s interpretation in your own words: “God has shown me...”

Does Peter explicitly say, “God showed me all animals are now lawful food”?

Does Peter explicitly apply common/unclean language to human beings?

EVIDENCE CHECK

Peter’s own explanation is not optional evidence. Any interpretation must account for Acts 10:28.

The Spirit Falls

Read Acts 10:34–48.

What does Peter preach before the Spirit falls?

What astonishes the circumcised believers?

What happens before anyone can require circumcision or Jewish conversion?

Acts 11 Retells the Story

Read Acts 11:1–18.

What criticism does Peter receive in verse 3?

Which parts of Acts 10 does Peter repeat?

How do the Jerusalem believers summarize what God has done in verse 18?

Test the Two Strong Readings

Reading	Strongest Evidence	Hardest Detail to Explain
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Food-law change ALSO implied	kill/eat; Peter's dietary objection; cleansing language; threefold repetition	Peter's explicit people-centered interpretation; no animal is eaten; Acts 11 conclusion
People-centered symbolic vision	Cornelius introduced first; Peter perplexed; 10:28; Spirit falls; Acts 11:18	why God used literal food commands and cleansing language over animals

Which reading currently explains the most details with the fewest ignored verses?

Text vs. Inference

Claim	TEXT or INFERENCE?	Evidence
Peter had never eaten what he considered common or unclean		
Peter was initially unsure what the vision meant		
God showed Peter not to call any person common or unclean		
The Spirit fell on uncircumcised Gentiles		
Acts 10 explicitly says Leviticus 11 is abolished		
Acts 10 may contribute evidence to a broader food-law question		

Coffee Break Reflection

Which detail have you most often heard skipped when Acts 10 is taught?

What is the strongest evidence against your preferred shortcut?

Build Your Conclusion

What does Acts 10 clearly prove about Gentiles?

What does Acts 10 clearly prove about Peter's dietary practice before the vision?

What food-related conclusion, if any, do you think the passage supports beyond its explicit people-centered interpretation?

What additional passages must you study before claiming a complete biblical doctrine of clean and unclean food?

My Working Interpretation

In one paragraph, what did Peter's vision actually mean?

Prayer + Application

Yehovah, where might I be treating someone You are drawing near as though they do not belong at Your table?

Where do I need more humility about the difference between what Scripture explicitly says and what I infer from it?
