

WESTERN WISDOM BIBLE STUDY

Peter's Vision



On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour:

And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance,

And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel

descending upon him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth:

Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.

And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat.

But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.

And the voice spake unto him the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.

This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven.

—The Acts 10:9-16

The lovable Peter, the "Rock," was a Jew by birth, and therefore steeped in the Jewish laws and customs. The Torah had been the basis of his religious training, and from early youth he had been taught that it was sinful to eat "unclean" foods—those not prepared according to the rabbinical teaching. His had been a high privilege in becoming an apostle of Christ Jesus, and being taught many of the deeper mysteries of the inner wisdom of the New Dispensation. However, he had not hitherto been required to sanction unreservedly the teaching that it is not that which goeth into the mouth but that which cometh out that defileth a man. Those of the Abrahamic Covenant (but not the gentiles) were entitled to the glorious promise of the Messiah.

In order that Peter might be given

the clarity of understanding which he prayed for a vision was shown to him three times. It was in this way indicated that all food was given by God, and that "uncleanness" in no wise depended upon the provision made by the Torah in regard to the method of preparing food. There was to be no distinction between *kosher* and *unkosher* meat, nor between gentile and Jew, so far as the followers of the Christ were concerned. A fundamental tenet of Christianity was being established.

When the seeking Peter, in the first vision, was commanded, "Rise, Peter, kill, and eat," he was too astounded at an admonition directly contrary to what he had been taught to think of obeying. He felt sure that he was being tempted by the Evil One. However, when the vision was repeated twice more, and he was told, "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common," he realized at last that the will of God was being revealed to him. God had created everything, everything was pure. He was never again to call any of God's creatures unclean or unholy.

Having been convinced of the meaning of his vision, Peter accepted it wholeheartedly. Plainly, the coming of the Lord of Love was to abrogate the Law, and the apostles were henceforth to act and teach in accordance with this teaching.

(The flesh of animals was not yet explicitly forbidden as food for human beings, as it had served and would continue for a time to serve a purpose in man's evolution. Those sufficiently enlightened would know that under the Christ Dispensation abstinence from meat eating would become universal. Only the harmless life is consistent with the teachings of Christ Jesus.)