



PETER'S VISION - ACTS 10

DID PETER'S VISION HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH FOOD?

By George Lujack

ACTS 10:10-16 (NKJV):

And he (Peter) 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 unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners and let down to the earth. Wherein were in all manner of four-footed 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 any thing that is common or unclean.” And the voice spoke to him again a second time, **“What God has cleansed do not call common.”** This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven.

When taken and read out of context, many proclaim these verses instructed Peter to eat all things because God cleansed them through Messiah (Christ). The meaning of these verses is not so literal and simplistic. Reading these verses alone and out of context is what many people like to do to justify eating anything they want, but to understand the true meaning of these verses, the whole of Acts chapter 10 through Acts chapter 11:18 needs to be read and comprehended in its entirety.

Peter, having lived with Yeshua (Jesus), surely knew of God's dietary laws. Peter actually told the voice of the Lord in this vision that he would not eat and that he had never eaten anything common or unclean. After having this vision, Peter questioned the meaning of the vision and thought upon it, but did not eat any unclean creature (Acts 10:17-19, 11:8).

Although Peter was initially confused and perplexed, a further reading of Acts reveals that Peter did come to understand the true meaning of the vision that God had given him. So what was it that God was instructing Peter through this vision? What did God cleanse that should no longer be called common? Answer: the non-Jewish Gentile peoples.

ACTS 10:28 (NKJV):

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

ACTS 10:34-35 (NKJV):

Then Peter opened his mouth and said, “In truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons. But in every nation *whoever* fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him...”

ACTS 10:43 (NKJV):

“To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, *whoever* believes in Him shall receive remission of sins.”

ACTS 11:4-18 (NKJV):

But Peter explained it to them in order from the beginning, saying: “I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me: Upon which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And I heard a voice saying unto me, **“Rise, Peter; kill and eat.”** But I said, “Not so, Lord! For nothing common or unclean has at any time entered into 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 go with them, doubting nothing. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man’s house. And he showed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, ‘Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter, who shall tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved.’ And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, as on us at the beginning.

Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how that he said, **“John indeed baptized with water; but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”** If then God gave them the same gift as He gave us, when we believed on the Lord Yeshua Messiah (Jesus Christ), who was I that I could withstand God? When they heard these things, they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, **“THEN GOD HAS ALSO GRANTED TO THE GENTILES REPENTANCE TO LIFE.”**

Peter’s fellow apostles and brethren, circumcised Jews who were believers in Messiah (Christ), confronted him for meeting with Cornelius and the two other uncircumcised men with him:

ACTS 11:2-3 (NKJV):

And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those of the circumcision contended with him, saying, “You went into the houses of uncircumcised men and ate with them!”

The Lord's vision to Peter used unclean creatures as a metaphor for the Gentile peoples of the world. Peter came to understand that the meaning of the vision was to meet with Cornelius, a Roman centurion and a God-fearing righteous man, and two other men. Peter was not to treat Gentiles as common or unclean persons anymore, as was the Jewish custom. This Jewish tradition was based on Scripture, as non-Jews or non-believers of the Hebrew God were referred to as unclean persons.

God set apart the Israelites from the other nations through the circumcision covenant (Genesis 17:10-14).

Deuteronomy 12:15 and 22 further illustrate that God, in the Tanakh (Old Testament), referenced Hebrew Israelite people as 'clean,' and non-Israelite Gentile people as 'unclean.'

DEUTERONOMY 12:15,22 (NKJV) [WITH INTERPRETATION]:

“You may slaughter and eat meat within all your gates, whatever your heart desires, according to the blessing of YHWH (the Lord) your God which He has given you; the unclean [GENTILE] and the clean [HEBREW] may eat of it, of the gazelle and the deer alike. ... Just as the gazelle and the deer are eaten, so you may eat them; the unclean [GENTILE] and the clean [HEBREW] alike may eat them.”

Yeshua Messiah (Jesus Christ), through His perfect unblemished sacrifice, cleansed all of the uncircumcised Gentile races, as well as the Jews, to be forgiven of their sins through repentance and belief in Him (Acts 11:18). God used unclean creatures as a metaphor to illustrate that the uncircumcised Gentile races, who were once considered unclean, were no longer unclean. There is no longer any ethnicity or race of people that should be considered unclean due to non-circumcision.

When read in its complete context and with a proper understanding, it is clear that the vision given to Peter in Acts 10 has nothing to do with eating unclean creatures. Peter never ate anything unclean during his life and did not eat anything unclean as a result of receiving this vision, even though he was very hungry (Acts 10:10). Peter spent years with Yeshua (Jesus), knew God's dietary laws well, and wasn't about to start breaking them.

The Lord's vision to Peter did not mean that He died on the cross to sanctify unclean animals as food. The vision meant that Peter could now meet with Gentiles to preach and teach the gospel. Peter and the apostles had previously been commanded by Yeshua (Jesus) not to meet with the Gentiles...

MATTHEW 10:5-7 (NKJV):

These twelve Yeshua (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. And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’”

Upon His resurrection, Yeshua (Jesus) lifted His restriction against preaching to the Gentiles.

MATTHEW 28:18-20 (NKJV):

And Yeshua (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; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Peter apparently wasn't paying close attention to Yeshua's (Jesus') Great Commission Command to make disciples of all the nations, thus he had to be further instructed with the vision of Acts 10.

If someone were to receive a vision believed to be from God, and that vision instructed him or her to go and kill someone, or go out and sin in some other way, well... the person should surely not literally obey such a vision, just as Peter did not obey the vision to kill and eat unclean creatures. Visions do not overturn God's laws.

Peter, after having received his vision in Acts chapter 10, and his subsequent refusal to obey the vision to eat unclean creatures – choosing instead to adhere to God's dietary commands, knowing that the vision must have meant something else, actually confirms that God's dietary laws remain in effect.