

WATCHMAN'S TEACHING LETTER

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TO THOSE WHOM THE COVENANT BELONGS

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A MONTHLY TEACHING LETTER

This is my one hundred and eleventh monthly teaching letter and continues my tenth year of composing these publications. Since *WTL* #88 we have been continuing a series defending the apostle Paul. We have, for now, completed the phase of defending Paul's writings, and we will now concentrate on some of the more important passages of Paul's epistles. Those who are condemning Paul have wittingly or unwittingly joined with the bad-fig-jews to destroy anything Christian. With this lesson, we will take up the subject of how it took Peter fourteen years to fully comprehend his vision at Acts 10:10-16. The other passage where this topic is discussed is at Galatians 2:1-21. The 15th chapter of Acts has probably raised more problems than any other chapter in the Book of Acts. Likewise, the 2nd chapter of Galatians is difficult to correlate with Acts chapter 15, even though both are addressing the same subject. It might seem to many that Paul was creating a new belief system, but he regarded his gospel as a fulfillment of former scripture. Paul makes this clear at 1 Corinthians 11:1: "**Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.**" So don't ever accuse Paul of starting a new religion! And inasmuch as Yahshua Christ Himself said at Matthew 15:24: "**But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.**" So neither did Paul go to anyone other than "the lost sheep of the house of Israel", or he could never have made such a statement as he did at 1 Corinthians 11:1!

So, to get this lesson started on the right track, we must understand that Paul never went to anyone except lost Israelites, nor did he introduce a new religion. Just because the famous David Livingstone went to Africa to missionary among the natives, followed by Henry M. Stanley, does not lend credence to the view that such an activity was sanctioned by either Yahshua Christ or Paul, but just the opposite! Today's churches are following Stanley and Livingstone rather than Yahshua Christ or Paul.

Most well-intending, but misinformed Christians point to Acts 10:10-16 to support their insistence upon the consumption of unclean foods such as swine, where Peter had a vision, which says: "**10 And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, 11 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: 12 Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. 13 And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. 14 But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. 15 And the voice *spake* unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, *that* call not thou common. 16 This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven.”

Three times makes this very important! You will notice here it says, “... great sheet knit at the four corners ...”. Any truly alert Bible student will recognize that the “four corners” spoken of here represent Israel as they camped in the wilderness in the formation of a square. It’s not unclean animals in the sheet but unclean Israelites who were divorced from the Covenant. Once divorced, they became “not a people”, and came under the classification with unclean heathen. Then Christ, whom most people call “Jesus” but who was Yahweh in the flesh as Yahshua, came to redeem Israel back to Himself. Israel, once divorced by Old Testament law, could not be remarried to Yahweh again, except by one provision, and that being that either Israel or Yahweh must die. This was the whole purpose of the crucifixion, for upon Yahshua dying, the way was clear for Him to once again remarry Israel as he had done before. Therefore, it says further, “What God hath cleansed, *that* call not thou common.” Yahweh didn’t die for pigs, but rather Israelites! Unclean food is as dangerous to eat as it ever was! It is blasphemous to even suggest that Christ died for pigs!

The significance to the matter of this vision is found at Acts 11:1 & 18, which say the following: “¹ **And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles** (sic divorced heathen lost Israelites) **had also received the word of God ...** ¹⁸ **When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles** (sic divorced heathen lost Israelites) **granted repentance unto life.” Pigs? You’ve got to be kidding!**

One would think that once Peter had this vision his disposition toward non-Judaeans would change, yet fourteen years later he had the same attitude. But let’s review the passage which was the purpose for Peter’s vision in the first place, found at Acts 10:1-9:

“¹ **There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band,** ² **A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always.** ³ **He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius.** ⁴ **And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.** ⁵ **And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter:** ⁶ **He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the seaside: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.** ⁷ **And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually;** ⁸ **And when he had declared all these things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.”**

We see from this that not only Peter had a vision, but also Cornelius had a matching counterpart vision paralleling Peter's. To dwell only on Peter's part of the vision is a terrible mistake, for the one without the other makes the whole narrative of no value whatsoever. In other words, Peter's vision without Cornelius' vision is worthless, and Cornelius' vision without Peter's vision is just as worthless. Yet the only thing many can think of when reading this passage is eating a ham sandwich. Maybe it should be called: "ham sandwich theology". Here we have probably one of the most important passages in all Scripture, and some want to reduce it to a ham sandwich!

Here, in the 10th chapter of Acts, we have the first reaching out, after the Crucifixion, of the Bridegroom to lost Israel, the bride, welcoming her back to the fold with these coordinated visions to both Peter and Cornelius. It is the ultimate jeer of blasphemy to cheapen such a great event: for the remarriage of Yahshua to His Israel people. Cornelius was only the first of many to follow. However, it took Peter fourteen years to grasp the full significance of his vision. We will now pick up the story fourteen years later at Galatians 2:1-21 (KJV):

"¹ Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with *me* also. ² And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles [sic nations], but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain. ³ But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: ⁴ And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus [sic Yahshua], that they might bring us into bondage: ⁵ To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you. ⁶ But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed *to be somewhat* in conference added nothing to me: ⁷ But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as *the gospel* of the circumcision *was* unto Peter; ⁸ (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles [sic nations]:) ⁹ And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we *should go* unto the heathen [sic nations], and they unto the circumcision. ¹⁰ Only *they would* that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do. ¹¹ But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. ¹² For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles [sic nations]: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. ¹³ And the other Jews [sic Judaeans] dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. ¹⁴ But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before *them all*, If thou, being a Jew [sic Judaeans], livest after the manner of Gentiles [sic nations], and not as do the Jews [sic Judaeans],

why compellest thou the Gentiles [sic nations] to live as do the Jews [sic Judaeans]?¹⁵ We *who are Jews* [sic Judaeans] by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles [sic nations],¹⁶ Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus [sic Yahshua] Christ, even we have believed in Jesus [sic Yahshua] Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.¹⁷ But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, *is* therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid.¹⁸ For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.¹⁹ For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.²⁰ I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.²¹ I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness *come* by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.”

It can be demonstrated that by “works of the law”, Paul was referring to the Old Testament rituals prescribed by the law to atone for sin, and not the law itself. I would like to lift out verses 11 through 16 to show you that Peter had not changed his ways of shunning non-Judaeans except in the case of Cornelius. And one must remember that the incident with Cornelius had happened fourteen years previous to this, and he was still snubbing all non-Judaeans. These lifted out verses say:

“...¹¹ But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.¹² For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles [sic nations]: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.¹³ And the other Jews [sic Judaeans] dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.¹⁴ But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before *them* all, If thou, being a Jew [sic Judaeans], livest after the manner of Gentiles [sic nations], and not as do the Jews [sic Judaeans], why compellest thou the Gentiles [sic nations] to live as do the Jews [sic Judaeans]?¹⁵ We *who are Jews* [sic Judaeans] by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles [sic nations] ...”

The following is William Finck’s translation of these same five verses: “...¹¹ **But when Kephas had come to Antiochia, I had confronted him personally because he was condemning himself:¹² for before some who were to come from Iakobos, he had eaten in common with the Nations, but when they came he withdrew and separated himself, being in fear of those of the circumcised;¹³ and also the rest of the Judaeans had acted with him, so that even Barnabas had been led away by them in hypocrisy.¹⁴ But when I had seen that they did not walk uprightly, according to the truth of the good message, I had said to Kephas before them all: If you, being a Judaeans, live like a foreigner and not like a Judaeans, how do you compel the Nations to imitate the Judaeans?¹⁵ We, Judaeans by nature, and not wrongdoers from the Nations ...”**

If you have a good center reference in your Bible, the “fourteen years” mentioned at Galatians 2:1 will take you to Acts 15:2, where we need to quote verses 1 through 15, for it is parallel to Galatians ch. 2:

“¹ And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. ² When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. ³ And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles [sic nations]: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren. ⁴ And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them. ⁵ But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command *them* to keep the law of Moses. ⁶ And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter. ⁷ And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles [sic nations] by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. ⁸ And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as *he did* unto us; ⁹ And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. ¹⁰ Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? ¹¹ But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus [sic Master Yahshua] Christ we shall be saved, even as they. ¹² Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles [sic. nations] by them. ¹³ And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: ¹⁴ Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles [sic nations], to take out of them a people for his name. ¹⁵ And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written ...”

It is quite clear with these first 15 verses of Acts 15 that Peter hadn't really comprehended the full significance of his vision of the four-cornered sheet until fourteen years later, when confronted by Paul. Please note the words of Peter again at verses 7-9:

“... ⁷ And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles [sic nations] by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. ⁸ And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost [sic Spirit], even as *he did* unto us; ⁹ And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith ...”

Had not Paul confronted Peter about this issue, Peter would have continued his snubbing of the non-Judaeans, but because Paul “withstood him to the face”, Peter remembered his sheet-vision and made this meritorious confession. Had not Paul stood his ground, we today might never have heard the message of the gospel. In our prayers, we should never stop thanking Yahshua for sending us Paul who stood up to

Peter! Also, in our prayers we should never stop thanking Yahshua for picking Peter as an apostle, for without his honesty and intestinal fortitude concerning his sheet-vision we might not have this great confession of his, which was a major turning-point for all of us lost Israelites.

These passages which I have been quoting here have generated every kind of error and confusion, for lack of understanding, and many times Luke is blamed. As I have stated before, the Book of Acts is a book of transition from the Old Testament to the New. Not that the Old is nullified or abolished, but the New Testament is simply a fulfilling of the Old. Therefore, what might seem true at the beginning of Acts is not necessarily true at the end of Acts. For instance, at the beginning of Acts both Peter and Stephen did not fully comprehend the true identity of lost Israel. The bottom line is: Peter and Stephen were not totally aware of who all composed true Israel at the time they made their utterances at Acts 2:22-23; 3:12-15; 5:29-30 & 7:51-53! Not knowing the so-called "Gentiles" (ethnos) were actually Israelite "nations", Peter and his companion disciples considered them as "unclean", and they were not about to take the Gospel to non-Israel people! Had Peter and his companion disciples known the so-called "Gentiles" were Israelites, the vision wouldn't have been necessary!

Acts 2:22-23 reads: "²² **Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Yahshua of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: ²³ Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain ...**" Was Peter addressing any of the lost tribes of Israel here? NO! At this point in time, there were not even ½ of one percent of the tribe of Judah, Benjamin or Levi represented in Judaea, and nearly 0% of the other tribes. The only one from the other tribes that is mentioned in the New Testament is Anna, at Luke 2:36. And chances are that some of whom Peter was addressing were actually of an Edomite or Canaanite extraction. So when Peter is recorded as saying, "Ye men of Israel" this misconception on his part must be taken in its proper context. At Acts 3:12-15, Peter commits the same miscue where he says:

"¹² **And when Peter saw *it*, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? ¹³ The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Yahshua; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let *him* go. ¹⁴ But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; ¹⁵ And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.**" The only way the phrase "Ye men of Israel" can be in context here is if it is referring to the citizens of Judaea, and we will take a look at a passage where "citizens" are meant rather than any tribe of Israel. The term "citizens" is used in its proper context at Luke 19:14 where it says: "**But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this *man* to reign over us.**"

Again at Acts 5:29-30, Peter didn't fully comprehend when he said: "²⁹ **Then Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.** ³⁰ **The God of our fathers raised up Yahshua, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.**" When reading this in the KJV the words "we" and "ye" are in conflict with each other. On the one hand Peter said, "We ought to obey God", but in the next verse said, "whom ye slew and hanged on a tree". It should be clear here that two different parties are meant. The word "our", in the phrase "The God of our fathers", is also confusing to some readers. All we have to do to resolve what is being said here is to ask the question, "Is it recorded anywhere that Peter and the *other* apostles helped to crucify the Christ?" It is amazing, but there are those in Israel Identity who actually teach that the "ye" are "we"! Two such people are Ted R. Weiland and Matthew Janzen.

Then at Acts 7:51-53 we read: "⁵¹ **Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers *did*, so *do* ye.** ⁵² **Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers:** ⁵³ **Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept *it*.**" This is part of the exhortation which Stephen gave to the remnant nation of Judaea just before he was stoned to death by a mixed crowd. Historically, knowing who the "citizens" of Judaea at Stephen's time were, it is obvious that there were both a smattering of pure-blooded Judahites as well as those who had an Edomite or Canaanite genetic background. So part of Stephen's allegations here can apply to the Judahites, while other allegations apply to the Edomite-Canaanite mixed group. It is evident here, like Peter before him, Stephen was unable to discriminate between the two types of citizens occupying Judaea.

Also, to add to this disarray of language the term "Jew" is confusing as we read it in most Bibles. The only way we can analyze the term "Jews", as used in the KJV at Acts 2:5, is to examine the context of that verse! To begin this process, I will quote from *The Complete Word Study New Testament*, compiled and edited by Spiros Zodhiates, on the Greek word #2453 translated "Jews", page 779:

"2453. Ἰουδαῖος *loudaíos*; fem. *loudaía*, neut. *loudaíon*, adjective, Jewish, substantive, a Jew or a Judean, from Judea. All the posterity of Jacob were called 'Israel' or 'children of Israel' from the surname of the patriarch, until the time of King Rehoboam. Ten tribes, revolting from this prince and adhering to Jeroboam, became known from then on as the House of Israel. The two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, remaining faithful to the family of David, were called the House of Judah. Therefore, after the defection of the ten tribes, *loudaíoi*, Jews, signified subjects of the kingdom of Judah (2 Kgs. 16:6; 25:25; Jer. 38:19; 40:11). After the Babylonian captivity, the name 'Jews' was extended to all the descendants of Israel who retained the Jewish religion, whether they belonged to the two or the ten tribes and whether or not they returned to Judah ... It is in this extensive sense that the word is applied in the NT (Acts 2:5, 10 [cf. 26:7; James 1:1]) ..."

While this source is not entirely perfect, it clearly demonstrates how the application of this term came into misuse. It also shows why there was a lack of

discrimination concerning the identification of the citizens of Judaea: between those of true Judah and those of Edomite-Canaanite extraction, and how with such perversion of the two separate terms “Judah” and “Israel” became errantly synonymous. Once we grasp this fact, we can better understand why it is recorded that both Peter and Stephen addressed the citizens of Judaea as “Ye men of Israel” rather than “Ye men of Judaea”. The same mistake is still being made today among all religious sects, and even among those in Israel Identity who should know better. Had Peter and Stephen really wanted to have addressed “Ye men of Israel”, they would have had to send letters throughout the continent of Europe and much of eastern Asia. The reality is, both Peter and Stephen did not fully comprehend who the true Israelites were or where on earth they had gone. And had it not been for the sheet-vision to Peter and the mysteries revealed to Paul, we still wouldn’t know these things today! And it takes a blithering idiot to associate Peter’s four-cornered sheet-vision with a ham sandwich!

It wasn’t easy for Paul to gain support in Jerusalem for his Yahweh-given commission, to go to the nations that lost Israel had become. It was during the Council of Jerusalem which convened in or near the year 49 A.D. that differing matters came to a head and weighty decisions were made which greatly effected the course Paul and the ekklesia would take. At this time, there were only three centers where Christianity had a substantial foothold: Jerusalem, Antioch and Glastonbury in Britain. Unbeknown to the Council of Jerusalem, its days were numbered, for in another 20 years Jerusalem would exist no more. So it was imperative that Paul’s mission to the nations be successful. For Paul, it was now or never. I don’t believe that the average Bible student is astute enough to anticipate such pending catastrophes that loomed ahead for Paul. Paul would never live to see the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, but he predicted it at Romans 16:20. So not only were the Council of Jerusalem’s days numbered, but Paul had only about 18 years to complete his job. Therefore, every single minute of every single hour of every single day was of the essence. And the entire key to the question lay with Peter, and how timely was his great confession of his vision, and when he finished speaking there was no further discussion on the matter!

Dare we even consider the damage that would have been done to Christianity had the Council of Jerusalem continued in a deadlock with Paul on the issue for another five or six years? No doubt that would have wiped out one of Paul’s missionary journeys, to say the least. It is my opinion that had not Peter spoken out when he did, the Council of Jerusalem would never have reconciled their differences with Paul, and Christianity would not have survived! So by Peter’s initiative the dispute was settled, and one of the major hurdles was overcome for the transition from the old Temple rituals to the uniting of the wife (lost Israel) to the Bridegroom (Yahshua).

With that heated debate resolved, the delegation from Antioch had won their case. When one considers the circumstances of the Jerusalem ekklesia in 49 A.D., the final decision reached by the followers of the Nazarene there must be considered one of the boldest and most generous in the annals of ecclesiastic history. While the Jerusalem ekklesia ministered exclusively to their own nation in making this great decision, they refused to impede the progress of the other branch of the Christian mission, whose every success would mean further oppression for themselves. Their

only request was that in view of Judaeen fears and sensibilities, the converts of the nations abstain from certain heathen practices named at Acts 15:20. To such a decree Paul seems to have been more than happy to concede.

The decision made at Jerusalem had far-reaching effects. It freed the Gospel from any unnecessary entanglement with Judaism and the ritual institutions of the Old Testament. Thus the mission to the nations and the Jerusalem ekklesia were able to progress side by side for a short period without any essential conflict, until they were finally forced out to Pella during the Roman siege in 70 A.D. Secondly, the reactions to Paul were clarified, and the Christian community at Jerusalem came to have a more positive attitude toward him.

After the disruption caused by the Judaizers (whether they were bad-fig-jews or misguided Judahites) had been settled at Antioch, Paul decided to make another visit to the various ekklesia which had been founded during his first missionary journey. This score of years between the conference of the Council of Jerusalem until its fall under Titus should be looked upon as probably the most critical period of the history of the ekklesia. After the differences had been resolved, Paul was able to revisit the various ekklesia that he had founded during his first missionary journey, establishing them securely in the faith. With the problem of the so-called "Gentiles" behind him (which were really the **nations** that the lost tribes of Israel had become), the door was opened for him to make at least two more major missionary journeys to proclaim the Gospel to the lost tribes.

I hope, by this presentation, the reader has a greater awareness of the true meaning of Peter's four-cornered sheet-vision, and how by the guidance of the Spirit it became the means of clearing the way for the Gospel to be spread to the lost Israel nations. The Scriptures are full of symbolism, and we have to learn how to recognize those symbols. Peter's vision of a four-cornered sheet was an Israel symbol, for Israel always camped in the formation of a square. If in the past you have been unable to recognize the true meaning of Peter's vision, don't feel bad, for Peter himself didn't realize its true meaning for about fourteen years. And if Paul hadn't "withstood him to the face", he may never have recognized its true interpretation. It is people who don't understand the symbols of Scripture, but rather attach a literal meaning to them (like a ham sandwich) that confuse the subject. During my lifetime, I have sat under a lot of preaching, and I don't remember a single pastor who didn't get on the ham sandwich subject when commenting on these passages. To literalize the Scriptures to this extent cheapens them to a very low level. Not only that, but it causes much confusion among the laity that makes it almost impossible to establish the truth of the matter.

With many good-intending Christians today (and probably in the past) if one suggests that these passages aren't speaking of eating unclean foods, they get very irate. These well-intending Christians' conduct is usually very friendly and amiable, that is, up until one interferes with their ham sandwich, and then all hell breaks loose.