A Study on the Ancient Israelite Food Culture

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Abstract

This study was conducted to examine how the Jewish nation, which disappeared in the history, has come to history again after 2000 years, considering the investigation of the Pentateuch from old testaments in the bible that might be recorded from B.C 1446 to 1406 about 3440 years ago. The foods in the era of the Pentateuch were classified by a strict rule which stipulated eatable clean foods and uneatable unclean foods. According to the Pentateuch, Israelites must not have blood, and the rule has still influenced them strongly. Sacrificial rites were classified into five categories: burnt offering, grain offering, peace offering, sin offering and guilt offering. The subdivisions of the seasons were Passover, Festival of Unleavened bread, Festival of First fruits, Festival of Harvest, Festival of Trumpets, Day of Atonement, Festival of Shelters; and those seasons were explained clearly by their meanings and even methods. Contrary to general food culture instructed by custom and tradition, the commandments transcribed the food cultures for the Food Sanitation Act in themselves long ago. Those commandments even remark the results brought to the observant and the disobedient stringently.

Key words: Pentateuch, Torah, Abraham, Diaspora, Clean food, Unclean food

Ⅰ. Introduction

Bible is the christian scriptures consisting of the Old and New testaments or the Jewish scriptures(Oxford University Press 2003). Especially the Pentateuch(Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy) in old testaments are called "Torah" in Jewish. Bible is not only law literally, but also it is Jewish religious books and wisdom comprehensively(Freedman 1970). Torah, a present old book, was found in the pottery jars in a cave at Dead Sea northern shore from 1947 to 1952. It is called "Dead Sea scroll" using carbon-14 dating and standard archaeological and paleographical principle; scientist estimated these scrolls written from between BC 250 and AD 70. Most of the scrolls are kept in the Rockefeller and Israel museum (Donley 2006). By the discovery of the books, the orthodox of old testaments was proved. The food culture of Korean was influenced
by the natural environment (Han 2002), and every nation has formed different politics, economics, history and historical issues due to regional differences (Shin & Kwon 2001). The scientific researches involving historical issue and recording long history for unique food culture of Korean contributed the Korean culture of food and the innovation of food industry. There are several researches, for example, the issues for relief food (Kim & Lee 1992), the analytical study for cooking process of Ryuk-Jab-Rok (Kim & Lee 1993), the study of fruits recorded in Donguebogam (Shin et al. 2000), the analytical study for cooking in Eum Sik Cheek and etc (Kim et al. 1992). For the representative study of cultural exchanges in food (Kim 2006), there were many researches which cultural exchange. There were some studies previously for better understanding of how the food are different according to the region mentioned in the bible: the study about ingredients of Israelites (Chae 2007), the study about the bible mentioned in the bible (Woo 2007), the study about fruits in the bible (Kim & Lee 1999) and the study about agricultural products mentioned in the bible with priority to the cereals (Kim & Lee 1998).

Western culture is divided into Hellenism and Hebrew in general. Hellenism influenced the development of philosophic and scientific idea, whereas Hebrew affected to the today’s central idea of religious. The Hebrew based on religious culture in Genesis 14:3 has been considered as the absolute power of Rome, Europe and England over the United States. Since food and the eating behavior are formed in the boundaries of culture, what kinds of food people eat for living and how they are related to food have a strong relationship to their perceptive values over personal tastes.

The origin of Israel was based on the story that the departure of Abraham born in Iraq Ur, the birthplace of Mesopotamia civilization listened to the voice of Yahweh’s order to go to the Land of Promise meaning of flows of milk and honey, Canaan (Israel). Israelites headed to Egypt in B.C 1875 due to the famine befallen in Israel, and they had to suffer from slavery for 430 years until Moses escaped from Egypt in B.C 1445. Even though the imperial age began, they divided into those two nations Israel and Judah in B.C 920 as a short period of untied in the regimes of the second David and the third Solomon Kingdom. In B.C 722, Israel was ruined by Assyrian, in B.C 586 Babylonian demolished Judah and many Israelites had to move for slavery over three times. As a result of conquest of Persian for Babylonian, they could return to their country; however, in B.C 100 they had to experience the conquest by Rome. Many Israelites spread over France, England, Germany, Poland and Russia. In A.D 70, they had contended against Rome for independence. However, they were in vain and were driven into the tragedy disappeared in human history for a long time (Paraiso 1989). Since than, they could not live longer in the Land of Promise that Israelites had thought God had given them for glory land, and spread out all over the world called “Diaspora”. There had been two major forces, “Sepharad” lived in Iberia and “Ashkenaz” settle down near Rhine River.

In A.D 636, Arab in Muslim had their rule on them, and in the middle of World War II they had an affliction for 6 millions losses of consanguinity. After all, they were new-born as a result of World War II ceased on May 14th in 1948. However, the war between Israel and Arabic unions, alliance of Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan allied was