

*Unclean Animals
and
Food*

*Examined from a
Biblical Viewpoint*

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“Do not think that I have come to remove the Instructions or the Prophets. I did not come to remove but to fulfill. Truly, I say to you that until heaven and earth pass away, not even one yod or one stroke will pass from the Instructions until everything has happened.

“Therefore everyone who removes even the smallest of these commandments and teaches this to the children of men will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But everyone who will do and will teach them, that one will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven.”

Matthew 5:17 to 20

‘For I am Jehovah who brings you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. You will therefore be holy, for I am holy.

‘This is the law of the beasts and the birds and every living soul that moves in the waters, and of every living soul that creeps on the earth, to distinguish between the unclean and the clean, and between the animal that may be eaten and the animal that may not be eaten.’

Leviticus 11:45 to 47

Food and Unclean Animals

In the Bible, God tells us which animals we are allowed to eat and which animals are not acceptable as food for humans. The clean animals are those that can be used for food and sacrifices, while the unclean animals are everything else. Many Christians believe that in the New Covenant God removed this prohibition and all animals are now acceptable as food. Is there clear Biblical support for this idea, or is it yet another form of lawlessness that Satan uses to deceive people into elevating their own desires above the Instructions of God? Let us examine God's Word to understand the truth of this situation.

God's Declaration of Clean and Unclean Animals

The first comprehensive listing of clean and unclean animals we have is recorded in Leviticus chapter 11. However, the list was not created as a new law just for the Hebrews. The Bible clearly reveals that Leviticus 11 only confirms a previously established situation. More than one thousand years prior to the Exodus, God told Noah to take seven pairs of clean animals and two pairs of unclean animals in the Ark (Genesis 7:2, also note Genesis 8:20). How could Noah do this without knowing which animals were clean and which were not? Even further back, probably only a few decades after Creation, Abel knew to sacrifice a clean animal, one of his first-born sheep, to God (Genesis 4:4). Until the end of the Great Flood, God did not permit humans to eat animals, so all of God's pro-Flood disciples were vegetarians (Gen 1:29-30, Gen 9:1-4).¹ Lamb was not on Abel's menu. The sacrifice was entirely religious, to remind Abel and everyone else that they were sinners and could only be redeemed by

¹ This does not mean that we must eat meat today, and in the future we will all be vegetarians again when everything is restored. These things are covered in more detail in our [*Animals in the Bible*](#) article.

the death of an innocent other. The post-Flood Levitical list is summarised in Deuteronomy 14:

“These are the animals which you may eat: the ox, the sheep, the goat, the deer, the gazelle, the roe deer, the wild goat, the mountain goat, the antelope, and the mountain sheep. And you may eat every animal with cloven hooves, having the hoof split into two parts, and that chews the cud, among the animals.

“Nevertheless, of those that chew the cud or have cloven hooves, you will not eat, such as these: the camel, the hare, and the rock hyrax; for they chew the cud but do not have cloven hooves; they are unclean for you. Also the swine is unclean for you, because it has cloven hooves, yet does not chew the cud; you will not eat their flesh or touch their dead carcasses.

“These you may eat of all that are in the waters: you may eat all that have fins and scales. And whatever does not have fins and scales you will not eat; it is unclean for you.

“All clean birds you may eat. But these you will not eat: the eagle, the vulture, the buzzard, the red kite, the falcon, and the kite after their kinds; every raven after its kind; the ostrich, the short-eared owl, the seagull, and the hawk after their kinds; the little owl, the screech owl, the white owl, the jackdaw, the carrion vulture, the fisher owl, the stork, the heron after its kind, and the hoopoe and the bat.

“Also every swarming thing that flies is unclean for you; they will not be eaten.

“You may eat all clean birds.

“You will not eat anything that dies of itself; you may give it to the alien who is within your gates, that he may eat it, or you may sell it to a foreigner; for you are a holy

people to Jehovah your God. You will not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.² Deuteronomy 14:4 to 21³

An examination of the clean animals shows that they are generally herbivores. In contrast, many of the unclean animals are carnivores or scavengers. Such animals will concentrate any toxic materials in their environment, which can make them a dangerous food for us. Many shellfish are filter feeders which remove contaminants from the water. Viewed simply from a health perspective, God's choice of clean animals makes good sense. When we also remember that Jehovah God is the designer and creator of humans and all the animals, it is obvious that He knows which meats are suitable as food for us.

Many of the unclean animals traditionally have not been regarded as food in Western nations, such as cockroaches, snakes and horses. As these nations were partly built on a heritage of Biblical principles this should not be a surprise. However, the unclean meats which have been commonly consumed are pigs, rabbits, shark and shellfish. Today it is becoming fashionable to eat many other unclean meats such as crocodile, snake, ostrich and octopus as well.

² This verse is misused by orthodox Judaists to justify their extreme practices of total separation of meat and dairy foods. They have separate kitchens for meat and dairy foods and will not consume a dairy product until at least six hours after eating meat.—This is part of what they claim to be the “oral laws of Moses.” In reality Moses only passed on the commandment in Deuteronomy 14:21 which was given to him by God and it was limited to this one practice. The prohibition prevented God's people from following what was a pagan religious practice at that time, protecting them from getting ensnared in paganism.

³ The translation used throughout this article is that of the Central Highlands Congregation of God unless noted otherwise.

Unclean Animals and Food Fat and Blood Forbidden

God also tells us that some parts of the clean animals are not to be eaten:

‘This will be a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwellings: you will eat neither fat nor blood.’ Leviticus 3:17

Today we know that eating too much saturated animal fat can be harmful to our health and may lead to heart problems, obesity, etc. However, the prohibition on consuming blood is spiritual:

“for the soul⁴ of all flesh *is* its blood. It is one with its soul. Therefore I said to the children of Israel, ‘You will not eat the blood of any flesh, for the soul of all flesh is its blood. Whoever eats it will be cut off.’ Leviticus 17:14 (Also Deuteronomy 12:23-25)

Because God made all of us, human and animal, He knows how our souls are constructed, where they reside and that they should not be eaten.

God’s Instructions Are for Our Good Always

God does not give us laws for His own amusement. Rather than fight against our Creator’s Instructions, we need to heed the words of Moses and understand that all of God’s laws are given to us for our own good:

‘And Jehovah commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear Jehovah our God, for our good always,

⁴ Soul in this passage is accurately translated from נֶפֶשׁ *nephesh* in the Hebrew. The soul and blood relationship is examined in more detail in our [Spirit, Soul and Body](#) article.

that He might preserve us alive, as it is this day. Then it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to observe all these commandments before Jehovah our God, as He has commanded us.’ Deuteronomy 6:24 and 25

God’s Instructions also forbid drunkenness and gluttony (Deuteronomy 21:20, Proverbs 23:21, Isaiah 56:11 and 1 Corinthians 6:10). Both of these excesses damage our bodies and reduce our desire to obey God.

Clean and Unclean Laws Go Way Back to Abel

We have seen that God’s Laws on clean and unclean animals were included in the Mosaic Covenant. We also showed that these instructions actually go all the way back to Noah and even to Adam and Eve’s son Abel. As Noah is an ancestor of every person alive today, through him that law applies to every human. Further evidence that God’s entire system of laws existed long before the Exodus is provided in Genesis 26:4 and 5 when God addresses Isaac:

“And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth will be blessed; because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.”

As we know that God “is the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Heb 13:8) we can be sure that the commandments, statutes and laws that Abraham kept are the same ones that God gave through Moses and are still in effect today.

Clean and Unclean Animals in the New Covenant

Discussing unclean animals in the New Covenant requires us to begin by examining the Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek words used to convey these concepts to the readers of English translations. It reveals that these concepts have been carried over from the Hebrew to the Aramaic to the Greek Scriptures. The willingness of some Christians to eat unclean meats is generally based on poor translations from the Aramaic and Greek and by interpreting verses out of their context. Let us look at some the words behind our English translations:

Hebrew Words:

טָמֵא *tame'* - Strong's number 2931 -Means unclean (or impure.) - when used of unclean animals, etc as in Leviticus and Deuteronomy it means permanently unclean by nature, not acceptable for a sacrifice nor for human food.

חָלָל *chalal* - Strong's 2490 - Primary meaning is to defile or make common. This can be something that was clean or pure which has been made impure or common.

Aramaic Words:

טָמֵא *tame* – Same as the Hebrew: unclean by its nature.

טַנְפְּתָא *tanfitha* – Similar to Tame' – Permanently Unclean – can also refer to unclean spirits (demons), who were once clean but have made themselves permanently unclean.

מְסַיֵּב *msayev* – Defiled, made impure, made common (ie – no longer sacred). Can usually be restored.

Greek Words:

ἀκάθαρτος *akathartos* - Strong's 169- Unclean- Greek equivalent of *Tame'*. Composed of *a* (Gk = not) and *kathartos* (Gk = Clean)

κοινός *koinos* - Strong's 2839- Common with two meanings - ordinary or defiled, and thus similar to the Hebrew and Aramaic. In

the ordinary sense it is like English: the object is common, not exceptional, not sacred. In the defiled sense it means making something that was holy into something that is now ordinary or making something that was acceptable into something contaminated. Nonetheless these are things that can be cleansed again.

Using these definitions, let us see what the New Covenant tells us:

The first thing we need to know is that there is a direct command in the New Covenant for us to avoid unclean things. If we are not to even touch an unclean thing, such as flesh cut from an unclean animal, it is obvious that we are not to eat it either:

And what agreement does the Palace of God have with demons? For you are the Palace of the Living God. It is just as it is said: “I will dwell in them and I will walk in them. I will be their God, and they will be My people.”

Therefore “Come out from among them and be separate from them, says Jehovah. You will not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.” And “I will be a Father to you, and you will be My sons and daughters, says the Almighty Lord Jah.”

Therefore, as we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all the impurities of the flesh and the spirit, and let us cultivate holiness in the fear of God.
2 Corinthians 6:16 to 7:1

Unclean in the above passage is translated from **ܢܗܘ** *tame* in the Aramaic Peshitta and is *ἀκάθαρτος* *akathartos* in the Greek manuscripts. These are the words for permanently unclean. It is worthwhile to remember that only clean animals were to be offered to God at His temple under the Mosaic Covenant. (eg. Leviticus 9:1 to 4) As we are now God’s temple (palace)—if we have God’s Spirit in us—surely only clean food should enter us too.

Unclean Animals During the Great Tribulation

Unclean spirits are mentioned in Revelation showing that what is unclean will still be unclean even near the end of the coming Great Tribulation:

And he shouted in a great voice, “Babylon the Great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a habitation for demons and a prison for every unclean and detestable spirit! For all the nations have drunk of the wine of her fornication she mixed for them, and the kings of the earth have fornicated with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the power of her infatuation.”

And I heard another voice from heaven that said, “Come out from within her, My people, lest you share in her sins, that you do not receive of her plagues.”
Revelation 18:2 to 4

The Greek adds ‘and a cage for every unclean and hated bird’ to verse 2, reminding us that unclean animals will still be unclean. We must stay away from such practices if we do not want to suffer in the plagues which God will send against Babylon.

Eating Unclean Animals Can Lead to Death

God has prophesied in detail about the fate of those who are eating unclean animals and following unclean practices when Jesus returns to establish God’s Kingdom. First let God establish that a mouse is an unclean animal, and then we will look at the prophecy.

‘These also will be unclean to you among the creeping things that creep on the earth: the mole, the mouse, and the large lizard after its kind; Leviticus 11:29

For behold, Jehovah will come with fire and with His chariots, like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by His sword Jehovah will judge all flesh; and the slain of Jehovah will be many.

“Those who sanctify themselves and purify themselves, to go to the gardens after an idol in the midst, eating swine’s flesh and the abomination and the mouse, will be consumed together,” says Jehovah. “For I know their works and their thoughts.”

“It will be that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they will come and see My glory. I will set a sign among them; and those among them who escape I will send to the nations: to Tarshish and Pul and Lud, who draw the bow, and Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands afar off who have not heard My fame nor seen My glory. And they will declare My glory among the Gentiles.

“Then they will bring all your brethren for an offering to Jehovah out of all nations, on horses and in chariots and in litters, on mules and on camels, to My holy mountain Jerusalem,” says Jehovah, “as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of Jehovah. And I will also take some of them for priests and Levites,” says Jehovah.

“For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make stand before Me,” says Jehovah, “So will your seed and your name stand. And it will be that from New Moon to New Moon, and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all flesh will come to worship before Me,” says Jehovah. “And they will go out and see the corpses of the men who have transgressed against Me. For their worm will not die, and their fire will not be put out, and they will be an abhorrence to all flesh.” Isaiah 66:15 to 24

The context proves that the initial setting is the time of Christ's Return and then moves into the establishment of the Millennium of Peace on earth. The prophecy reveals some aspects of what true worship of God will be like at that time. But the context of this article demonstrates that God will destroy those eating swine and mouse, both unclean animals, and following pagan religions. Leviticus 11:11, 13, 20, etc show that the carcasses of unclean animals are abominations to us. As our Messiah's Return is still future, this prophecy proves that God has not repealed His laws relating to unclean animals.

Jeshua Came to Establish God's Law

Indeed Jeshua (Jesus⁵) Himself tells us not to think that He came to destroy His Father's Laws:

“Do not think that I have come to remove the Instructions or the Prophets. I did not come to remove but to fulfill. Truly, I say to you, that until heaven and earth pass away, not even one Yohd or one stroke will pass from the Instructions until everything has happened.

“Therefore everyone who removes even the smallest of these commandments, and teaches this to the children of men, will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But everyone who will do and will teach them, that one will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven. For I say to you, that unless your righteousness becomes

⁵ *Jeshua* ܝܫܘܥ is the actual Aramaic name of Jesus, which means “Jehovah Saves”. It is written as Jeshua throughout the Aramaic Peshitta, which forms the basis for the New Covenant in our translation. The Greek translation of Jeshua is *Iesous* Ἰησοῦς, which is commonly translated into English as Jesus. In a similar manner, *Messiah* (ܡܫܝܚܐ *msheecha*) is the Aramaic title of Jeshua. *Christos* Χριστός is the Greek translation of Messiah, all of which mean “The Anointed” in English.

greater than that of the scribes and the Pharisees, you will not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.” Matthew 5:17 to 20

Just to make sure we got the message, Jeshua gives it to us again:

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘My Lord, My Lord,’ will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘My Lord, My Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name? And we have cast out demons in Your name, and we have performed many miracles in Your name.’

“And then I will declare to them, ‘I have not known you from the beginning of time; remove yourselves far from Me, you workers of evil!’ Matthew 7:21 to 23

Let us not practice lawlessness, for we want to be included in God’s Kingdom. Jeshua died to free us from sin (sin is transgressing God’s Instructions). Now that we are liberated from sin, we are enabled by the Holy Spirit to keep to God’s Laws:⁶

For the Instructions of the Spirit of Life in the Messiah Jeshua has freed you from the instructions of sin and of death. For the Instructions were weak because of the infirmity of the flesh. God sent His Son in the form of sinful flesh, because of sin, to condemn sin in His flesh, that the righteousness of the Instructions would be fulfilled in us, that we would not walk in the flesh but in the Spirit. Romans 8:2 to 4

And in this we know that we love the children of God, whenever we love God and we do His commandments.

⁶ This is explained clearly in [*Free to Obey God*](#).

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For this is the love of God—to keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdens. 1 John 5:2-3

And the dragon was enraged against the woman, and it went to make war with the remnant of her seed, those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jeshua. Revelation 12:17

Beware, lest anyone rob you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the teachings of men, according to the principles of the world, and not according to the Anointed. For in Him dwells all the fullness of Divinity bodily; and in Him who is the Head of all principalities and powers you also are completed.

In Him you were circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of sins through the circumcision of the Messiah, and you were buried with Him in immersion, in which you also arose with Him because you believed in the power of God, who raised Him from the house of the dead.

And you who have died through your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has given you life with Him, and has forgiven us all of our sins, and He has, by His authority, wiped out the record of our debts that was against us. And He took it from our midst, and He nailed it to His stake.

And by putting off His body, He stripped the principalities and the powers, and He publicly shamed them by His Existence.

Therefore let no one bother you about food or drink, or in regard to the feasts and the beginnings of months and sabbaths; because these are shadows of things to

come,⁷ and the body is the Anointed. Colossians 2:8 to 17

In the Colossians passage note especially vs 14 which shows that Jeshua does away with the list of our sins against God's instructions by dying on his stake (cross). It does not do away with God's Law as is commonly taught. Also in verses 16 and 17 notice that it is only the body of Christ—the true Congregations of Christ—which we should listen to in matters of food or festivities (holy days), not the principalities, powers and robbers of this world nor the traditions of the false “church”.

The Order of Melchizedek

Hebrews chapters 7 and 8 also shows that some temporary regulations which were added to the Mosaic Covenant due to the transgression of God's fundamental laws have been replaced by better laws. For example, the Levitical priesthood has been replaced by the order of Melchizedek, led by Jeshua the Anointed. Animal sacrifices have been superseded by the sacrifice of the Son of God (Hebrews 7:27). God's Instructions are no longer written on stone, but placed in our hearts (Jeremiah 31:33, Ezekiel 36:26-27, 2Co 3:3). This is the true circumcision which has replaced the physical (Romans 2:25 to 29). Again, God was with the Israelites during the Exodus, but today He actually lives within us (John 14:19-21).

⁷ These holy days (feasts) are important shadows of what is coming. Paul is telling us to keep them and to let only our true brothers and sisters in the Anointed (the Body of Christ) guide us in how to observe them. These ‘shadows’ give us understanding of God's Plan of Salvation. Paul himself also observed them as shown in Act 20:6, 1Co 16:8, Heb 4:9, etc.

Scriptures Misused to “Abolish” God’s Food Laws

Having now laid a firm basis showing the continued validity of God’s Instructions, let’s look at some of the scriptures which are twisted to make lawlessness appear to be righteousness.

Mark 7—Unwashed Hands

This confrontation between Jeshua and some Pharisees and scribes is often claimed to teach that it is acceptable to eat whatever we want:

Then the Pharisees and scribes who came from Jerusalem gathered around Him, and they saw some of His disciples eating bread and their hands were not washed, and they complained. For all the Judeans and the Pharisees do not eat unless they have carefully washed their hands, for they hold to the traditions of the elders. And they do not eat food from the marketplace unless it is washed, and there are many other traditions which they have received and hold, like the washing of cups, pots, brass vessels, and beds.

Then the scribes and Pharisees asked Him, “Why do Your disciples not walk according to the traditions of the elders, for they eat bread while their hands are not washed?”

And He said to them, “Isaiah the prophet prophesied about you hypocrites, as it is written: ‘This people honour Me with their lips, but their hearts are very far from Me. And their fear of Me is worthless, while they teach as teachings the commandments of the children of men.’”

“For you have left the commandment of God and you have embraced the tradition of the children of men; the

washing of cups and pots, and many other things like these.”

He said to them, “So you reject the commandment of God, that you may establish your tradition. For Moses said, ‘Honour your father and your mother’; and, ‘Anyone who curses his father and his mother, let them be put to death.’ But you say, ‘If a person says to his father or to his mother, “My offering is whatever you might have received from me.”; then you do not allow him to do anything for his father or his mother. So you despise the word of God because of the tradition which you have handed down. And you do many similar things like these.”

And Jeshua called all the crowd and said to them, “Hear Me, everyone, and understand: There is nothing that enters into a person from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a person. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”

And when Jeshua entered a house away from the crowd, His disciples asked Him about that saying. He said to them, “You are also slow to understand. Do you not know that whatever enters into a person from outside cannot defile them, because it does not enter into his heart but enters his belly, and is cast out by excretion, cleansing all the food?” But whatever comes out of a person, that is what defiles a person. For from inside, from the heart of the children of men, proceed evil thoughts, adultery, fornication, theft, murder, extortion, wickedness, deceit, lust, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride and foolishness.

“All these evil things, they come from within and defile a person.” Mark 7:1 to 23

Indeed in verse 21 Jeshua says that it is not eating food which defiles a man, and the eating of it can actually cleanse the food. But we need to notice two things about this statement. First, there is no mention whatsoever of unclean things (ܢܩܘܒܐ *tame* in the Aramaic Peshitta and ἀκάθαρτος *akathartos* in the Greek manuscripts), but only defiled things. Second, it is only food which is cleansed through eating. Unclean things are not food for us as God made clear in Leviticus 11. But Jeshua did not leave us in doubt about this conversation. It is also recorded for us in Matthew, where Jeshua's final statement is given:

“Do you not know that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and from there is expelled as excrement? But whatever proceeds out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and becomes defilement for a person. For from the heart proceeds evil thoughts, adultery, murder, fornication, theft, false witness, and blasphemy.

“These are what defile a person, but if a person eats with unwashed hands, he is not defiled.” Matthew 15:17 to 20

Jeshua clearly shows that the issue being discussed is whether it is acceptable to eat clean foods which have been “defiled” by being touched with hands which have not been washed in the traditional manner of the Pharisees. Jeshua shows that as these washing regulations are not from God, they do not really defile either the food or the consumer. If His disciples were eating something that was actually biblically unclean, the Pharisees would have made that the major issue.⁸ Indeed, as the next scripture shows, Peter makes it clear that even several years after Jeshua's crucifixion he was still following Jeshua's example and had never eaten anything unclean.

⁸ However, Jeshua uses this situation to point out what really matters: what we think, do and say is far more important than when and how we wash our hands.

Acts 10—Peter’s Vision

And the next day, while they were travelling on the road and came near the city, Simon went up on the roof to pray, at the sixth hour. And he was hungry and he wanted to eat; but while they were purchasing food for him, a trance fell upon him. And he saw the heavens, as if they were opened and a garment like a great linen sheet tied at the four corners, and it was descending from heaven to the earth.

In it there were all kinds of four-footed animals and creeping things of the earth, and birds of the heavens. A voice came to him, saying “Simon. Arise, slay and eat.” But Simon said, “Never, my Lord! For I have not ever eaten anything that is defiled or unclean.”

And again, the second time, a voice came to him, “Those which God has purified you are not to defile.” And this occurred three times. Then the garment was taken up into heaven.

Now while Simon wondered within himself what this vision he had seen was, the men who Cornelius had sent arrived and they asked for the house where Simon dwelt, and they came and stood at the gate to the courtyard.
Acts 10:9 to 17

As we noted above, Peter still believed that people should not eat things which were unclean or described biblically as defiled. So we see that he is puzzled by this vision which appears to tell him that it is now acceptable for him to eat defiled and unclean food. However, he (and we) are not left in doubt about the meaning of this vision for long. Within two days Peter was inside a gentile’s home, and then he understood what God was telling him in the vision:

Unclean Animals and Food

But Simon raised him up, and said to him, “You stand; I also am a man.” And as he talked with him, he went in and found that many had come together there.

Then he said to them, “You know that a Judean man is not allowed to associate with a foreign person who is not a child of his race. But God has shown me that I should not say about a man that he is defiled or unclean. Acts 10:27 to 28

As with the earlier hand washing example, the “law” against a Jew entering a gentile’s home was not one of God’s Instructions, but rather was one of the traditions of the Pharisees, the founders of Judaism. Sadly, Peter had been observing this tradition. He finally understood that Jeshua had died to cleanse all of humanity from sin (1 John 1:7, Ephesians 2:14). He could no longer restrict his ministry to Jewish people only. Peter now embraced the knowledge that he could not regard all non-believing gentiles as unclean or believing gentiles as defiled anymore. Jeshua did not die to cleanse unclean animals. The unclean animals were only used as symbols in the vision to reveal to Peter how terrible his attitude towards non-Jews was at that time, as his non-interaction with them was causing them to remain defiled.

Romans 14:14—Defiled Food

First let’s read this verse accurately translated and presented in its context:

So then, every one of us will give an account of his soul to God.

From now on, let us not judge one another, but rather resolve this, that you will not lay a stumbling block before your brother. For I know and I am convinced by Lord Jah Jeshua that there is nothing that is defiled

before Him; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.

But if you grieve your brother because of food, you are not walking in love. You should not destroy by your food the one for whom the Anointed died.

Do not let our good be insulted; for the Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Whoever serves the Messiah in these things is beautiful to God and approved by the children of men.

So, now let us run after peace and after building one another up. Let us not destroy a servant of God because of food. For everything is pure, but it is evil for the man who eats it with a stumbling block. It is good that we do not eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which our brother is subverted.

You who have faith in your soul, have it before God. Blessed is he who does not condemn his soul in what he approves. For whoever doubts and eats condemns himself, because he is not doing everything in faith; for whatever is not from faith is sin. Romans 14:12 to 23

The above passage correctly translates *מִסֵּיב* *msayev* (it is *κοινός* *koinos* in the Greek). As we shall see, the “defiled” food consists of clean food which has been handled with “defiled” hands or has been offered to idols. The following quote of the Authorised Version is taken, exactly as it appears here, from the Online Bible, including the editor’s comment in brackets. The editor thus admits that ‘unclean’ should not have been used. This example shows how an incorrect translation can twist the meaning of Scripture. This AV translation makes it appear that Paul is saying there is no longer anything that is really unclean.

I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jeshua, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that

esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.
{unclean: Gr. common}

So we see that Romans 14:14 is talking about defiled food rather than flesh taken from an animal that God has declared to be unclean.

As we have already talked about defiled hands, let's look at food offered to idols:

“Therefore I say that you should not oppress those from the gentiles who are turning to God, but we will send word to them that they should abstain from unclean sacrifices, from fornication, from things that were strangled, and from blood.

“For Moses has had since the ancient generations those who preach him in every city, being read to the congregations on all Sabbaths.” Acts 15:19 to 21

So here we have a specific list of prohibitions to be kept by Gentiles who are becoming Christians. Fornication is forbidden. They are also to keep away from blood and from eating animals killed in such a way that their blood has remained in the body (ie-strangled). Unclean sacrifices (Things polluted by idols in the Greek) refers in part to food, often meat, which has been offered to an idol before being sold as food. This restriction was intended to keep the gentiles from getting caught up again in the pagan religions which they had just been liberated from. The following passage clearly explains the issues raised in Romans 14:14:

Now about sacrifices made to idols: We know that we all have knowledge, and knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as it is necessary for him to know. But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him.

Therefore concerning food sacrificed to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but the only One. For even though there are what are called gods, whether in heaven or on earth, as there are many gods and many lords, yet for us ours is one God, the Father, for everything is from Him, and we are in Him; and one Lord Jah—Jeshua the Messiah—for all is through Him, and we are also in His hand.

However, that knowledge is not in everyone; for there are some people who are conscious of the idol, and until now eat it as a thing offered to an idol; and because their conscience is weak, it is defiled. For food does not bring us to God; for if we eat, we gain nothing, and if we do not eat, we lose nothing.

But beware lest your strength becomes a stumbling block to the weak. For if a man sees you who has your knowledge reclining in the idol's house, behold, because his conscience is weak, he will be encouraged to eat those sacrifices. And so he who is weak perishes because of your knowledge; he for whom the Anointed died. For if you subvert your brethren like this, and tread on the conscience of the weak, you are sinning against the Anointed. 1 Corinthians 8:1 to 12

Eating foods defiled through being offered to idols is a problem if we think the idols/gods are somehow real. As some Christians (and many non-Christians) still think idols have some significance, it is better for us to avoid eating such things for their sake.

1 Timothy 4:4—Forbidding Clean Meats

This passage must also be examined carefully. Reading verse 4 alone suggests that all meat can now be eaten. However, reading the verse in context shows that the passage actually supports God's laws on unclean meat. Both verses 3 and 5 reveal that verse four can only

refer to vegetables and clean meat as that is what God has sanctified by declaring them to be clean foods. God has never sanctified unclean animals.

Now the Spirit says clearly that in the last times they will depart from the faith one by one, and they will go after deceiving spirits and after the teachings of demons; these will have false forms to deceive and speak lies, searing their consciences, and they will forbid marriage and abstain from those foods which God created for use and for thanksgiving by those who believe and know the Truth. For every creation is good to God, and nothing is rejected if it can be received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the Word of God and by prayer. Timothy 4:1 to 5

The context clearly shows that issue being discussed in Timothy 4 is the lies of false teachers who forbid God's people to marry and eat clean meat which God has sanctified for food. There have been various cults that have done this, such as the Roman Catholic 'Church' which forbids their clergy to marry and for many centuries forbade the eating of red meats on Fridays. The traditional 40 day Lent fast prescribed by many churches, especially Eastern Orthodox, also prohibits eating meat. Another cult example is Ellen White of the Seventh Day Adventists who taught that Christians should be vegetarians. These teachings are all unscriptural, as shown by this passage. Romans 14:2 teaches that Christians can be vegetarians if they wish, but there is no requirement to be vegetarian since the Flood (Genesis 9:3 & 4). In fact, our inability to produce Vitamin B12 and the lack of B12 in vegetable foods suggests that God intends us to have some animal food in our diets. We think that this has been done to remind us that just as our physical health requires the death of animals, our spiritual health requires the death of Jeshua.⁹

⁹ Though vegetarians can get enough B12 if they consume milk and eggs. For the last few decades the use of B12 extracted from bacteria allows

Conclusion

We now know that there are scriptures in both the old and new covenants which forbid eating the flesh of unclean animals. There are also scriptures which forbid gentile Christians from eating food offered to idols and recommend that no Christians eat such things. There are no scriptures which tell us that God permits us to eat unclean things. We must each choose whether we will follow God's Way or the world's way. But we must always remember that the spiritual things are paramount, even while dealing with the physical:

But if you grieve your brother because of food, you are not walking in love. You should not destroy by your food the one for whom the Anointed died.

Do not let our good be insulted; for the Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Whoever serves the Messiah in these things is beautiful to God and approved by the children of men.

So, now let us run after peace and after building one another up. Let us not destroy a servant of God because of food. Romans 14:15 to 20

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Software

Calculated Biblical Calendar - Calculates dates of Annual Holy Days, Crucifixion, Flood, Creation: allows you to test the new moon visibility locally.

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