

Unclean Meats

We have another law that God gave to man, and this is in relation to diet. From the very beginning of time there have been things that man could eat and those that he could not eat. Animals were created either clean or unclean. No law made them clean or unclean.

But for a record and a reference, the code was written telling which animals were clean and which were unclean, so man would know which could be eaten. To transgress this law also means that we have sinned. This is another way of showing our obedience and love to God.

1. **How do we know what we can eat and what we can't eat?** Leviticus 11:1-3

From these verses, God tells us how we can tell those things that we can eat. There are three signs:

1. The animal must have a cloven foot (solid foot).
2. That cloven foot must be split (like the cow).
3. The animal must chew the cud.

The animal must have all three of these distinctions. If it does not, we must refrain from eating it.

2. **What we must not eat.** Leviticus 11:4-8

There are several animals mentioned here that have some of the signs, but not all three. Notice it mentions the camel. The camel chews the cud, it has a cloven hoof, but its foot is not divided or split. So by this we know the camel is not clean for food. It mentions the rabbit (hare). The rabbit chews the cud, but does not have the cloven foot or the split hoof. So we know the rabbit is unclean.

It also mentions the swine (pig). The pig has a cloven foot, it has a split hoof, but it does not chew its cud. So the Bible says the pig is unclean and should not be eaten. To do so is sin, as we shall see later on in the study.

3. **What is there in the sea that we can eat?** Leviticus 11:9-12

Those things that live in the waters must have fins and scales. If they do not have both of these, then we can not eat them. The catfish has fins, but it has no scales, so we are not to eat it. Oysters, crabs, and other shellfish we should not eat, because the Bible says they must have both fins and scales.

4. **Is this law a part of the Law of Moses?** Genesis 7:1-5

At the time of the flood, God told Noah to bring into the ark seven each of the clean and those which were not clean by two's. At the time of the flood, there were animals that were not clean; this was many years before the Law of Moses was ever given. Thus, we can conclude then the Clean and Unclean Law has been in existence from the very beginning of time. They were tested in their diet, as we are today.

5. **Shall put difference.** Leviticus 20:23-26

Israel was not to be like the rest of the nations. The Israelites were to put difference between the clean beast and the unclean one. They were not to defile themselves by the unclean beast.

Now why would this meat defile them? It was because the animal was unclean and God told them not to eat it. To do so was sin, and it is the sin that defiles us.

6. **Did Christ die to cleanse the animal?** 1 John 1:7

This tells us that Christ died to cleanse us (man). So He did not die to cleanse the animal. If the pig was unclean in olden time, it is still unclean today. The same goes for the rabbit, camel, bear, or any other animal that does not have the signs of a clean animal. They are still unclean today.

7. Are there still unclean things referred to in the New Testament? Revelation 18:2

This verse speaks about Babylon inhabiting every “unclean and hateful bird”. I realize this is speaking in symbolic terms, but never-the-less, if there were no such thing as an unclean bird on this side of the cross, how could John use this symbol in this prophecy? This indicates very clearly there are unclean birds today. If there are still unclean birds, then there are still unclean animals.

8. Revelation 16:13

This verse tells us that frogs are still unclean today. Why are they unclean? Because the law of God is still in effect. The law does not make them unclean, but the law was given that we might know what was unclean. They were created unclean, so God does not want us to eat anything that is not clean.

He has given us many things that we can eat, such as the cow, sheep, goat, and deer, chicken, etc. So why should we eat those things that he commanded we shouldn't.

9. What warning is given if we eat the unclean? Isaiah 66:15-17

Notice especially verse 17. It says those who eat swine's flesh, the mouse, shall all be consumed at the coming of the Lord. Should we be concerned about what we eat then? If we can lose our salvation (and this verse reveals that we can) by eating the unclean animals, then we should be very much concerned.

We know a thief can not enter the kingdom, we know a liar can not enter, so likewise, we should not eat those things which God forbids.

10. What happens to those who do not obey? 2 Thessalonians 1:7-8

This tells us very plainly what happens to those who do not obey.

**SCRIPTURES USED TO SHOW WE
CAN EAT THE UNCLEAR**

11. Every creature is good. 1 Timothy 4:1-4

This tells us that every creature is good, and should not be refused. Now should we retract everything we have said? How can we incorporate this? It says that every creature is good. If it means that we can eat every creature, then notice the next scripture.

12. The commission of Christ. Mark 16:14-15

Christ told them to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. This tells us that we are creatures of God. If every creature is good for food, then that would mean that we can eat one another, for we are creatures of God. We know this can not be true. What does it mean?

13. Turn back to 1 Timothy 4:4 again.

Now first of all read verse 3, here it speaks about “...meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.” Here it speaks of meat which God did create to be eaten. The fourth verse continues with the same thought that those creatures are

good and should not be refused as those in the forepart of verse 3 were.

Now for the final thought notice verse 5, "*For it (the creature) is sanctified by the word of God...*" Now what does the word *sanctify* mean? It means to be "set apart".

The clean meat has been set apart by the word for our consumption. But if it has not been set apart by the word for eating, then we are to leave it alone, for God has told us not to eat it. Yes, every creature is good, if it has been sanctified by the word.

14. Peter and the sheet. Acts 10:9-20, 23-28, 34-35

There is a lot of information contained in these scriptures. Here Peter has a vision. In this vision he sees a sheet let down to the earth. On this sheet were all kinds of animals, clean and unclean, and they were touching one another. Peter was told to rise, kill and eat. Peter said he had never eaten anything "common or unclean". The word "*common*" means defiled. In olden times when an animal touched an unclean animal, it became "common" or defiled and was to be thrown away (see Lev. 7:19). But God tells Peter that He had cleansed something. What was it? Was it the animals?

At this time the Jews had no dealings with the Gentiles. They thought if they went into a house of a Gentile or touched him, they became defiled. But God used the vision of these animals to show Peter that he should not call any man common or unclean. If you read verse 28, you will see this is true. Then read verse 34-35.

No better way could God have chosen to show Pete that every man that God cleanses is no longer unclean. Cornelius was a Gentile, but God forgave him his sins and cleansed him. Peter even baptized him according to verses 44-47. So this has no reference to cleaning of animals, but God was showing that he accepted the Gentiles.

15 Not what goeth into the mouth. Matthew 15:1-2, 10-11, 17-20

So many people use this to show we can eat anything we desire, for this says it isn't that which goeth into the mouth that defiles the man, but that which cometh out of the mouth. So they feel they can eat anything they desire. Those very same people condemn drinking, yet alcohol goes into the mouth too.

But let's notice what is being discussed here. The subject is not the unclean meats. The subject is whether we can eat with unwashed hands. Jesus tells them that to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the body. So we can not use this to show we can eat the unclean meat.

16. Eat whatsoever is set before you. 1 Corinthians 10:27

This verse tells us to eat whatsoever is set before us. Does this mean if I eat in my friend's home and they served pork, that I can go ahead and eat it? The Bible tells us to obey God rather than man.

So how could this mean we can disobey the law of God. Could this have reference to something else?

Beginning with verse 19, you will notice that Paul is talking about those things that were sacrifices to idols. The people (the heathen) thought that if the meat had been sacrificed to an idol then it was something special, as that idol must have blessed the meat. If you read Acts 15:20 you will notice the people were to not have anything to do with idols or anything that was connected with the idol. By this they were to point the people or those who believed in the idol to the true God and to the Savior who died for their sins.

Again this verse has nothing to do with the unclean meat.

17. Let no man judge you. Colossians 2:16

Some people say we should not judge them if they eat unclean meat. For this says, "*let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink...*" If you feel this way, do you feel it is all right to drink? This also mentions we are not to judge those that drink! Yet the Bible says no drunkard shall

inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:10).

What does this verse have reference to? If you read from verse 14, you will notice it is speaking about those ordinances that were observed with food and drink; in other words, “feasts days”.

Some men had come in and were telling the people unless they continued to keep the old ordinances they could not be saved. The people were upset. Paul told them, “Don’t let it bother you whether you keep the ordinances (which included meat and drink) or not. Do not let what people think bother you.”

Then in verse 17, you will see that Paul explains to them the “meat and drinks” had their fulfillment in Christ. So again this has nothing to do with the eating of unclean meats.

SUMMARY

I hope by now that each one can see that not all meat is to be eaten. God also uses this as a test of our obedience. If we eat that which he has told us not to eat, we will be disobeying God the same as if we steal something. May God help us to be faithful.