

CLEAN FOOD in the NEW TESTAMENT



Are all foods okay to eat today?

Everyone has favorite foods, and in our day many of the most cherished dishes are scripturally unclean. "But that's Old Testament," many will argue. And they use a few favorite New Testament scriptures which they say prove that today all food is okay to eat. How can we be sure? Are animals and plants different today from what they were in Biblical times? Are they all cleansed now? Do these New Testament passages really prove that all food is scripturally clean today? Are other issues also important in this discussion? The argument of the no-law teachers is that everything that moves is fit for food. Do we accept on our dinner table a plate of roasted rat, caterpillar, chopped snake, or winged bat? Are these fit for food?

Before discovering the truth, few of us realized that life is governed by certain laws, just as the sun, moon, and stars above are governed by the laws of nature. Man cannot escape the law of the Creator. Man's every act is governed for the good or the ill of man, according to his daily response to the law of the Creator that was made for man - for man's benefit. All of the ancient worthies knew and kept the law of Yahweh.

In The Beginning

We read in the first book of the Bible, **"Elohim said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let him have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowls of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.'** So Elohim created man in His image, in the image of Elohim created He him. Male and female created He them. And Elohim blessed them and Elohim said to them, **'Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves upon the earth. Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for food.'**" Genesis 1:26-28.

Here we find out that although man was given authority and dominion over Elohim's creation, He doesn't command man to eat all things. Clearly there are poisonous herbs and fruit trees harmful to man, but Yahweh Elohim said there are also herbs and fruit trees fit for food. At

the creation Yahweh didn't give man the flesh of animals to eat.

Clean Animals Preserved for Food

Just before the flood, Yahweh directed Noah to build an ark to preserve the different kinds of animals according to species. Noah was instructed to take seven pairs of all clean beasts and two pairs of the unclean, **Genesis 7:2**. Yahweh Elohim had a purpose in preserving more clean beasts than unclean for use after the flood. As most vegetation was destroyed by the flood, Yahweh gave certain animal flesh for man's food. After the universal flood, Yahweh said in **Genesis 9:2-4**, "**And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every bird of the heavens, upon that which moves upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you; even as I have given the green herb, I give you all things. But flesh with the life which is in the blood, shall you not eat.**" Yahweh Elohim clearly permits man to eat certain flesh after the flood, but not blood. The difference between clean and unclean animals were given before the flood (**Gen. 7:2-3**).

Clean Food Laws Binding

The difference between clean and unclean animals which were given before the flood (**Genesis 7:2-3**), were later written down by Moses as a part of the Covenant.

About a thousand years after the flood, when the children of Israel were released from the bondage of Egypt they received from Yahweh through His servant Moses the commandments, statutes, and judgments which included the dietary law.

In **Leviticus 11** and **Deuteronomy 14** we find itemized and differentiated the clean and unclean beasts of the air, land, and sea. The law of diet was given for two reasons. First, because Israel was to be a chosen people, a peculiar treasure and a kingdom of priests unto Him above all peoples, **Exodus 19:5-6**, **Deuteronomy 14:2**. This relationship can only exist if the people involved are clean as they come before Yahweh. Second, all of Yahweh's laws including the dietary laws were given as a blessing for Israel.

Yahweh punishes the man who disobeys His laws. How? One way is through the law of cause and effect. Long before the invention of the microscope and the advancement of medical technology, Yahweh instructed man not to eat those animals which most readily transfer diseases and to eat only the more healthy meats.

Do you desire good health and long life? Remember the eternal promise of our Heavenly Father Yahweh written in His Word, **"If you will diligently hearken to the voice of Yahweh your Mighty One, and will do all which is right in His sight, and will give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon you, which I have brought upon the Egyptians; for I am Yahweh Rapha (the Healer)," Exodus 15:26.**

On the other hand, Yahweh warned that sickness and disease would surely befall the people if they disregarded His law of diet. These laws of clean foods were kept by righteous Israelites up to the time of the Messiah.

What did Yahshua say?

When the Messiah came, he gave a better, more spiritual understanding of many laws from the ancient scriptures. Many people believe that Yahshua repealed the laws of clean foods or that after our Savior was impaled on the tree to die for the sins of the world, all animals, fishes, and creeping things were cleansed for human food. What did Yahshua really say?

Hand Washing Hocus-Pocus

In **Matthew 15** we read that the Scribes and Pharisees tried to make an argument when they had seen the disciples eat bread without first washing their hands in a certain way. Pharisees didn't eat bread unless they washed their hands first, holding to their traditional beliefs. The no-law preachers are quick to quote part of Yahshua's answer from **Matthew 15:11**, **"It is not that which goes into the mouth which defiles a man; but that which comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man."** They contend that this verse allows us to eat all things. These Scriptures at first glance seem to support the no-law preachers in this presumption; but if we read verses 12 through 20, their argument evaporates and the light of the words of Yahshua shines through:

"Then His disciples came and said to Him, 'Do you know that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?'

But He answered and said, 'Every plant which my Heavenly Father has not planted shall be rooted up. Let them alone; they are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.

"Then Peter said to him, 'Declare this parable to us.'

"And Yahshua said, 'Are you also yet without understanding? Do not you yet understand, that whatever enters in at the mouth goes into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceeds evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. These are the things which defile a man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man.'"

The point Yahshua is making is that the inner attitude of the individual will determine his actions. He then goes on to show that evil thoughts generate evil deeds, which identify those thoughts as the root of all problems. The same story told in the seventh chapter of Mark provides a few more words which, in some translations, have caused still more misunderstanding. **Mark 7:19** reads, **"Because it enters not into his heart, but into his belly, and goes out into the draught (sewer) cleansing all meats."** The last three words do not mean that at that moment Yahshua through His words cleansed all unclean foods. His reference meant that waste food simply was carried off by the digestive tract. The Syriac translation reads more clearly: ". . . **carrying off all that is eaten.**"

The parable has nothing to do with cleansing unclean foods. Unclean animals continue to eat garbage and carrion. Carnivores continue to eat flesh. Yahshua's reference to bodily waste elimination is meant to show that we must not dwell upon nor retain unsavory and unwholesome thoughts. Bad thoughts are a breeding ground for the inevitable evil deed and must be flushed out. **"Cleansing all meats"** clearly means to purge all food from the stomach out into the sewer.

The issue was centered on the traditional and outward ritual cleansing, which made the Pharisees appear to be holy. But Yahshua wants us to have complete change of mind and heart, not of the outward appearance.

Yahshua admonishes them, **"Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you make the outside of the cup and of the platter clean, but inside they are full of extortion and excess. Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like white-washed sepulchers, which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but within are full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but within you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity," Matthew 23:25-28.**

The point concerned washing hands, not the eating of unclean meats, which no Jew would do.

Gentiles Cleansed

Another argument of the no-law advocates is based upon **Acts 10:9-19**:

On the morrow, as they went their journey, and drew near to the city, Peter went upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour: and He became very hungry, and would have eaten; but while they made it 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 all manner of four-footed beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him saying, 'Rise, Peter; kill, and eat.'

But Peter said, 'Not so, Master, for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.'

And the voice spoke unto him again the second time, 'What Yahweh has cleansed, that call not common.' This was done three times: And the vessel was received up again into heaven.

Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate, and called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, was lodged there. While Peter thought about the vision, the Spirit said unto him, 'Behold, three men seek you.'

From this passage many people assume that Peter's vision permitted him to eat all four-footed beasts, fowl, and creeping things. The vision of Peter occurred about ten years after the death and resurrection of the Messiah, and Peter had still never eaten anything common or unclean. The vision of Peter was not pertaining to the eating of unclean beasts, fowls, and all creeping things, but it revealed to the Apostle in his vision the acceptance of other nations or Gentiles into True Worship. The declaration of the Apostle Peter himself in **Acts 10:28** makes this clear:

"You know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but Yahweh has showed me that I should not call ANY MAN common or unclean."

The message is that Gentiles were to be accepted into the assembly and could become spiritual Israelites.

Paul's Writings

Many are misled by a misunderstanding of the writings of the Apostle Paul. Note the caution given us about Paul's teachings in the Epistle of **2 Peter 3:16**. "**As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which those who are unlearned and unstable wrest (twist), as they do also the other Scriptures unto their own destruction.**" The current teaching that the law is done away through Paul is the fulfillment of this prophecy.

Many people are blinded by the no-law preachers. Be aware of the teachings of the false teachers and false prophets. Imitate what the Bereans did upon hearing the words and receiving with all readiness of mind, searching the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so, **Acts 17:11**.

Conscience and Idol Meat

One Scripture that has confused many people is **1 Corinthians 10:25-27**: "**Eat whatever is sold in the market, asking no question for conscience sake. For the earth is Yahweh's and the fullness thereof. If an unbeliever invites you to a meal and you care to go, eat whatever is put before you, without raising questions of conscience.**"

Many strange items can be found in the various markets. In Corinth there were certainly unclean meats sold in the market. But in the case of the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul was referring to the eating of meat sacrificed to idols. The point was that since part of the animal is offered to idols, the idol and its worshipers were sharing a common meal. This, according to oriental thinking, creates a bond of fellowship between them. A further objection is that to join in pagan sacrificial meals destroys the True Believer's fellowship in Messiah.

Some have stumbled at another of Paul's verses, **Romans 14:14**, where he writes, ". . .**there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him that esteems anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.**" The English "unclean" should more properly be rendered 'common', as it is from the Greek *koinos*, and has the sense of 'not sacred' or 'profane'.

In verse 13 Paul stresses that we should not put a stumbling block in someone's way by passing judgment on him because he refuses to eat certain foods. He is again considering the subject of verse 2 in which the weak are vegetarians and are not willing to eat flesh. Yahweh has already told us in **Leviticus 11** and **Deuteronomy 14** which are the clean and unclean foods. Paul was talking about veggies & teetotalers.

If someone does not feel right in eating roasted locust, [a clean food, **Leviticus 11:21-22**] we should not flaunt this before him. Verse 15 shows that we are not to destroy the faith of others, but are to be charitable in our behavior toward them. This does not mean we are able to eat anything and everything just because it was created by Yahweh.

Approved Food Is Good

Another favorite Bible text used by the no-law preachers and teachers is the letter of Apostle Paul to the young evangelist Timothy. **"Now the Spirit speaks expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which Yahweh has created to be received with thanksgiving of those who believe and know the truth. For every creature of Yahweh is good and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified by the Word of Yahweh and prayer," 1 Timothy 4:1-5.**

By taking part of this verse and using it alone, some have not rightly divided the Word of truth. Notice the section which reads, ". . .
.commanding to abstain from foods which Yahweh has created to be received with thanksgiving of those who believe and know the truth. For every creature of Yahweh is good and nothing to be refused if it be received with thanksgiving, for it is sanctified by the Word of Yahweh and prayer."

A little thought on this passage leads us to understand that there are certain foods that Yahweh has created to be clean foods for His people. Those who are familiar with the clean foods of **Leviticus 11** and **Deuteronomy 14** know which foods are acceptable for Yahweh's people. These foods already have been sanctified (set apart for a holy purpose) for His people through His Word. Not only does Paul note that this good food is sanctified, but also that it is received with prayer. Paul was inspired by the Holy Spirit in his statements that in the latter times some will turn from the faith, meaning become apostate, by believing seducing spirits and doctrines that are prevalent today, even demonic teachings.

Two whole chapters describe which animals are fit food for Yahweh's people. In general, we are not to eat animals that are carnivorous (eat flesh) like cats, lions, pelicans, owls and eagles, neither are we to eat garbage-eaters such as swine, dogs, shellfish, vultures, and crows. Spiritist teaching is that animal food (whether clean or unclean) is favorable to the development of occult power. Yahweh's creation is to be "received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth."

What is the truth? The Word of Yahweh.

In **John 17:17** the Messiah provides insight, **"Sanctify them, purify, consecrate, separate them for yourself, make them holy through your truth. Your word is truth."**

We are part of Yahweh's creation, and who are we to refuse His creative works? Our only duty is to give thanks and praise for all blessings we receive from Him. In speaking of the conclusion of the age of man, Yahweh inspired the prophet Isaiah to write that Yahweh will come with fire, and with His chariots like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire.

"They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the garden behind one tree in the midst, eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, declares Yahweh," Isaiah 66:17.

Another warning made by **Isaiah in 52:11** reads, **"Depart, depart, go out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go out of the midst of her [churches], be clean, that bear the vessels of Yahweh."**

Even Paul was very explicit in his admonition to the Corinthian brethren, and his writings are for our instruction upon whom the end of the age is come, **1 Corinthians 10:11** and **2 Corinthians 6:17-18**. **"Wherefore come out from among them, and be separate, says Yahweh, and touch not the unclean thing and I will receive you. And I will be a Father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says Yahweh the Almighty."**

Acts 15 tells of a council held in Jerusalem to determine whether gentile converts who accepted Yahshua were required to be circumcised. The summation, as given by James, is found in verse 20, **"But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood."**

Many look upon themselves as being non-Israelites (however, Paul says we are all of Israel, **Gal. 6:16**) and assume these four requirements are all they need apply to themselves. That is, they believe we are to (1) avoid anything polluted through being offered to idols, (2) abstain from sexual impurity, (3) from eating animal flesh that has been strangled, and (4) from drinking blood.

Reflection on the practice of the gentile believers shows that they had been accustomed to worshiping pagan deities through offering animal sacrifices; engaged in pagan worship with temple prostitutes; ate ani-

mal flesh containing blood and drank the blood of animals. These things were counter to Yahweh's worship, and needed to be restrained by the gentile believers so both Jew and gentile converts could worship together.

Furthermore, James pointed out in verse 21, **"For Moses of old time has in every city them that preach him, being read in every synagogue every Sabbath day."** Thus, the gentiles would hear the Old Testament preached to them every Sabbath (**Acts 13:42-46; 17:2, 18:4**).

The clean food regulations of **Leviticus 11** and **Deuteronomy 14** would be explained to them. Therefore, to appeal to Acts 15 to show that believers are not under any restraints found in the Old Testament is folly, for Moses' words are read every Sabbath to Jew and gentile alike and eating unclean foods is forbidden in Moses' writings.

The person who desires to live in complete harmony with Yahweh's wishes will not neglect the clean food laws. We are to be a clean people; to live clean, think clean, and eat clean so that our body is a fit temple for the indwelling of Yahweh's Holy Spirit. These laws were established for our own good, and we can realize the blessings that come with observing them. They were kept by the Apostles even after the time of the Messiah (**Acts 10:14**)! They will be in effect under the death penalty when the Messiah returns, **Isaiah 66:17**.

The clean food laws will also be enforced during the Kingdom. **Ezekiel 44:23** reads, **"And they shall teach My people the difference between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean."**

Yahweh's people receive physical and spiritual blessings from following these laws today. Secure those blessings for your family today!

For a list of our other literature, please write or call:

Yahweh's Assembly in Messiah
401 N. Roby Farm Rd.
Rocheport, MO 65279

(573) 698-4335

Or visit us on the web:
www.yaim.org

Or e-mail us:
officestaff@yaim.org

