

Unclean Meats - Should They Be Eaten?

The Bible instruction regarding clean and unclean meats goes back to the beginning. In the pre-Flood world God instructed Noah, “. . . Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation. Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female: and of beasts that are not clean by two, the male and his female. Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and the female; to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth” (Gen. 7:1-3). Clean beasts were the only animals acceptable for sacrifice. Quite often the sacrifice was eaten by the one who did the sacrificing. The conclusion is obvious. The difference between clean and unclean animals was revealed to mankind long before the time of Moses. Both ceremonial and health considerations were involved. Noah, a man who was righteous (Psa. 119:172), was well aware of the law of clean and unclean meats.

Immediately after the Flood, there was further instruction regarding what should be eaten and what should not. “Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you. . .” (Gen. 9:3). This instruction may seem quite broad, but in reality the latter part of the verse limits what could be eaten. It states, “even as the green herb have I given you all things.” Those herbs which could be eaten were restricted in the same way the eating of flesh was restricted. In Genesis 1:29 we read, “And God said, 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 meat” (Gen. 1:29). Only herbs bearing seed could be eaten. Only flesh that was clean could be eaten. Restrictions, therefore, were placed on man’s diet from the beginning—restrictions that were in the best interests of man’s health and well-being. In the same manner that certain animal meat was forbidden, so was the eating of herbs. In both cases harmful food was forbidden.

The Law of God Regarding Animal Flesh

Take a look at Leviticus 11, and Deuteronomy 14. In these two chapters we find the Bible instruction regarding clean and unclean meats. We read in Leviticus 11:2, “Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, These are the beasts which ye shall eat among all the beasts that are on the earth.” Clearly, then, the Bible instructs that we can eat animal flesh. In fact, during the Old Testament period the eating of clean animals was mandatory, as sacrifices were required, and the participants often ate of the sacrifices, depending on the type. In spite of the fact that there are many people today who practice vegetarianism, this practice is not biblical. There may be health considerations because of the feed and hormones, and shots of one kind or another, etc., that livestock are given. Man’s greed for profit with weight-producing stimulants, chemical additives, etc., may be cancer-inducing. But these reasons are not based on the Bible instruction given in the Old Testament. One must be careful in his selection of good wholesome animals that have not been “doctored up,” but one must also be careful in the kind of animals he eats.

Notice the Bible instruction:

Whatsoever parteth the hoof, and is clovenfooted, and cheweth the cud, among the beasts, that shall ye eat. Nevertheless these shall ye not eat of them that chew the cud, or of them that divide the hoof: as the camel, because he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof; he is unclean unto you. And the coney, because he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof; he is unclean unto you. And the hare, because he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof; he is unclean unto you. And the swine, though he divide the hoof, and be clovenfooted, yet he cheweth not the cud; he is unclean to you. Of their flesh shall ye not

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eat, and their carcase shall ye not touch; they are unclean to you (Lev. 11:3-8).

Creatures from the sea are described in the following manner:

These shall ye eat of all that are in the waters: whatsoever hath fins and scales in the waters, in the seas, and in the rivers, them shall ye eat. And all that have not fins and scales in the seas, and in the rivers, of all that move in the waters, and of any living thing which is in the waters, they shall be an abomination unto you (Lev. 11:9-10).

Fowl is also taken into consideration:

And these are they which ye shall have in abomination among the fowls; they shall not be eaten, they are an abomination: the eagle, and the ossifrage, and the ospray, And the vulture, and the kite after his kind; Every raven after his kind; And the owl, and the night hawk, and the cuckow, and the hawk after his kind, And the little owl, and the cormorant, and the great owl, And the swan, and the pelican, and the gier eagle, And the stork, the heron after her kind, and the lapwing, and the bat. All fowls that creep, going upon all four, shall be an abomination unto you (Lev. 11:13-20).

An examination of the restrictions on fowl indicates that any bird that is a predator is not to be eaten. Also, some of the Hebrew words used to describe these birds are unclear to many translators. "Swan" is a mistranslation in verse 18. The Jewish Publication Society, in its version, shows it to be "horned owl." Gesenius in his Hebrew-English Lexicon of the Old Testament, on page 870, lists it as "an unclean aquatic bird." Other translations list it as "water hen." Orthodox Jewish guidelines list six characteristics for clean fowl. These are:

- (1) The fowl must have a crop.
- (2) It must have a gizzard with a double lining that can be easily separated.
- (3) It does not prey on other birds.
- (4) It does not devour its food while in flight.
- (5) Its hind toe and middle front toe are both long.
- (6) While perching, the fowl must have three toes on one side of the perch and the hind toe on the opposite side.

Even insects are classified as clean and unclean in the book of Leviticus. Those insects that can be eaten are grasshoppers and locusts. See Leviticus 11:21-23. "Beetle" is a mistranslation in verse 22 and more properly should be translated "wingless locust." All other insects are to be regarded as an abomination. Many people eat various kinds of small animals and snakes. These are prohibited. Notice verses 27-31.

And whatsoever goeth upon his paws, among all manner of beasts that go on all four, those are unclean unto you: whoso toucheth their carcase shall be unclean until the even. And he that beareth the carcase of them shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even: they are unclean unto you. These also shall be unclean unto you among the creeping things that creep upon the earth; the weasel, and the mouse, and the tortoise after his kind, And the ferret, and the chameleon, and the lizard, and the snail, and the mole. These are unclean to you among all that creep: whosoever doth touch them, when they be dead, shall be unclean until the even (see also vv. 41-42).

The concluding verses tell us, "This is the law of the beasts, and of the fowl, and of every living creature that moveth in the waters, and of every creature that creepeth upon the earth: To make a difference between the unclean and the clean, and between the beast that may be eaten and the beast that may not be eaten" (Lev. 11:46-47).

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Deuteronomy 14 gives us some specific examples of the kinds of animals that can be eaten. These include the ox, the sheep, the goat, the hart, the roebuck, the fallow deer, the wild goat, the pygarg (ibex), the wild ox, and the chamois (vv. 4-5). The text goes on to tell us, “And every beast that parteth the hoof, and cleaveth the cleft into two claws, and cheweth the cud among the beasts, that ye shall eat” (Deut. 14:6). Then we are told what not to eat.

Nevertheless these ye shall not eat of them that chew the cud, or of them that divide the cloven hoof; as the camel, and the hare, and the coney: for they chew the cud, but divide not the hoof; therefore they are unclean unto you. And the swine, because it divideth the hoof, yet cheweth not the cud, it is unclean unto you: ye shall not eat of their flesh, nor touch their dead carcase (Deut. 14:7-8).

As we can see from these chapters, there are definite characteristics which identify what animals are clean and therefore suitable for human consumption and what animals are unclean and unfit for eating. The question is, how willing is man, in general, to obey these laws of health? Whatever the case, God is not mocked. Notice the coming judgment.

For, behold, the Lord 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 will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many. They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swine’s flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the Lord (Isa. 66:15-17).

What does this text tell us? It tells us that the law of clean and unclean meats is still in effect when Christ returns!

These Restrictions Do Apply Today

There are a number of laws that regulate man’s health, among them diet. We are what we eat. Diet has been largely overlooked until recent years. Now, many doctors are becoming aware of the importance of a balanced and wholesome diet. In spite of this, most doctors are yet unaware of the laws regarding clean and unclean meats. The Bible makes it plain there are certain kinds of animal flesh that should not be eaten under any circumstances. This kind of flesh is harmful to the health and well-being of the individual who eats it. Many may not notice this harm immediately, but eventually a penalty in health will be paid. In addition, for the Christian, eating unclean animals violates the temple of God’s Spirit-the body of the one called of God.

Most of us desire to live long and productive lives. What is often overlooked in this quest is the spiritual aspect of life. Jesus instructed, “. . . Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4). Good health, then, comes about as a result of paying close attention to God’s instruction, as well as to common sense. To ignore God’s instruction is to court not only a lack of the overall fulfillment one desires, but outright bad health and disease. There is much in the Bible about maintaining good health. Cleanliness is emphasized. But so is the prohibition against eating unclean animals-a major factor concerning health. Half of the diseases of mankind today are incurable. We can be sure that ignoring the law of clean and unclean meats is a major factor in this gigantic health problem. Why? God does not change (Mal. 3:6). The law of clean and unclean meats is the same today as it was in ancient times!

What Does “Unclean” Mean?

The Bible is explicit when it states, “Of their flesh shall ye not eat, and their carcase shall ye not touch;

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they are unclean to you” (Lev. 11:8). What does the Bible mean by this? Let us quote from a pamphlet entitled, *The Hog: Should It Be Used For Food?*, by C. Leonard Vories, pages 10-13.

We know that God had some purpose in creating the hog, and we may well believe that He designed that it should be a scavenger in the animal kingdom, for we cannot think of one beast among all the beasts of nature which could better serve as a scavenger than the hog. Every one who knows anything about the hog knows that it is, by nature, a dirty creature. All have heard the trite old expression, ‘As dirty as a hog,’ when people wanted to make comparison to something filthy. See the brute as he wallows in the mud. See him in the very height of his glory, on top of a manure pile, with his head buried in the dung from which exalted site he gives expression to his joy and satisfaction by his rhythmical grunts.

Farmers know that when they are feeding cattle it will also pay them to keep hogs, so that the hogs can follow after the cattle, eat the filth from the cattle, and thus turn it into pork for the public market. . . .

Since starting this treatise, it has been the author’s privilege to spend a few days on a large poultry and stock farm. Many thousands of hens and hundreds of hogs were kept on this farm. When hens would die, they would be put into burlap sacks. After some had lain in the sacks for days and the odor from them had become unbearable, they were then loaded onto a truck, and hauled to the hog pen where they became feed for the hogs. This procedure was not unusual on this farm. It was the regular way of disposing of the dead hens. . . .

When the foul, impure foods upon which the hog will feed are referred to in connection with the teaching that pork is unfit for food, many will say that the hog is no more filthy in its habits of feeding than a chicken. If this were true, there is still a vast difference between the digestive system of a hog and that of a chicken. The chicken has two stomachs-the glandular stomach and the gizzard. . . .

From *The Youth Instructor*, of June 16, 1942, Vories quotes the following:

The clean bird has a stomach or gizzard with a double skin which can be easily separated. . . . Examples are the chicken, the turkey, and certain species of ducks and geese. Knowing these facts about the chicken, we might believe that the Creator permitted it to be used for food because it has a digestive system something like that of the clean beasts-a digestive system more capable of eliminating impurities from the food eaten than is the digestive system of the unclean animals (Vories, 13).

Next, Vories quotes Dr. Thomas Nelson, in *The Defender*, December 1939, issue:

. . . The animals that chewed the cud and divided the hoof, such as the ox, sheep, goat, deer, buffalo, etc., because of the sacculated condition of the alimentary canal and the secondary cud receptacle, have practically three stomachs, as refining agencies and cleansing laboratories, for the purifying of their food; thus weeding out from their systems most of the poisonous and deleterious matter.

It thus takes clean, vegetable food over twenty-four hours to be turned into flesh. . . . The dietary habits of all such vegetarian animals were also clean, in comparison with that of the omnivorous swine. On examining the swine’s anatomy, we find that, as a supplement to his bad appetite he has but one poorly constructed stomach arrangement, and very limited excretory organs generally. Consequently, in about three hours after he has eaten his polluted swill, putrid carrion, or other offensive matter, man may eat the same in second-hand style off the ribs of the pig.

This flesh the law condemns as unclean; not merely ceremonially unclean, but hygienically and physiologically as well. . . . The diet of the pig is so deadly that it generally kills the animal itself in about eight or ten years.

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If you examine carefully you will find a small abrasion behind the front foot of the pig. Rub it off clean and press the leg just above the abrasion, and you may squeeze a teaspoonful of dirty matter from it. This is original pork gravy. It is an outlet to a sewer-pipe that may be traced all through the animal's body. It helps to drain off the teeming filth with which the system is filled. . . .

On a close analysis of this filthy scrofulous serum, or the 'culture' of its bacilli under varied conditions, it is seen to contain the elements of many dangerous diseases and combinations; yet how toothsome is pickled pig's feet to ignorance, unbelief, and disobedience (Vories, 14-15).

Vories then goes on to describe what the flesh of swine is really like. On pages 14-15 of his pamphlet, he writes: "The microscope has revealed that the flesh of hogs is often infested with trichina worms, which when taken into the human body multiply and begin to work their way through the entire system, even into the brain and heart. This condition is known as trichinosis. Thus far there is no known cure for the disease, since nothing has been discovered which will kill the trichina without killing the person when once the worms have started working into the flesh." Vories goes on to quote T. C. Desmond, chairman of the Trichinosis Commission of New York State, who wrote, "One out of every twenty-five pork products purchased over the retail counter was found by our commission to contain the parasites. It has been estimated that our present hog crop may provide us with 60,000,000 trichinae-infested meals."

From the Illinois Health Messenger, October 15, 1938, Vories, on pages 16-17 of his pamphlet, quotes:

. . . Several years ago the government abandoned the microscopic examinations of meat as impractical, so that meats are no longer certified as free from trichina. Among samples of pork sausages and other pork foods bought in high-class San Francisco markets, McNaught and Anderson found living worm cysts in two samples out of every ten. It is possible to find a half-million trichinae to a single pound of muscle. . . . The worms enter the human digestive tract as tiny, almost invisible cysts which digest and release the worms, so that they burrow through the walls of the stomach or duodenum to the blood stream. The result is symptoms similar to food poisoning if the number of parasites is sufficient. Later may come rheumatic-like pains, or the worms may settle temporarily in the heart. Inflammation of the cardiac region may follow. In some cases the brain or nervous system may be disturbed, as though worms had invaded brain or nerves, which possibly they do. Even invasion of the muscles may be fatal if the worms are numerous enough.

From Signs of the Times, March 11, 1941, Vories quotes: "Dr. Harry Most of New York University, asserted that in an examination of one hundred human bodies in New York City, more than one out of five were infested with trichinae." The doctor then added that in two hundred examinations of the diaphragms of orthodox and unorthodox Jews there was "only one positive case." Vories then goes on to tell us that, "many persons, while reading this treatise will be reasoning with themselves that the only danger of contracting trichinosis from pork eating comes from eating raw pork and that some form of cooking would remove all danger. If that were true, it hardly seems that cooked worms could be appetizing, but it is clearly evident that many do not cook pork sufficiently to kill trichinae" (Vories, 18). Vories adds, from Leaflet 34, p. 8, USDA, "In a series of 24 cases of trichinosis reported recently, 22 were said to have resulted from cooked pork."

On page 20 of his pamphlet, Vories correctly states: "Regardless of the many Scriptures condemning the hog as an article of food, and all the discoveries of medical science revealing the wisdom of abiding by the prohibitions of Holy Writ, many continue to eat the brute from head to tail." From The Defender, December 1939, he quotes, "His [the swine's] body is eaten, his head is turned into head cheese, and even his ears and tail inserted. His blood is turned into blood pudding; his stomach is transformed into tripe; his feet are pickled; his intestines are used for sausage covers; his heart, liver, and kidneys are cooked; and his very bristles are sought for wax ends, etc."

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In the concluding paragraphs of Vories' pamphlet we read:

Much of its fat is made into lard to be used for shortening in cooking, baking and preparing of other foods, therefore it is most likely that more animal fat is eaten through the use of pork than is consumed by the eating of any other flesh foods, and that one fact is now giving tremendous scientific support to the strongest argument that can be produced against eating the swine.

Many medical doctors and nutritionists are concluding that animal fats are a big factor in producing cholesterol in the blood stream and too much cholesterol in the blood causes atherosclerosis (sic)-a form of hardening of the arteries. . . . While it can correctly be said that heart disease is the 'number one killer' in America, we may also safely say that atherosclerosis contributes more than anything else in making heart disease number one of all the killers (Vories, 28).

The Meaning of Peter's Vision

Many who read the Bible interpret Acts ten, to sanction the eating of unclean animals. There we read Peter “. . . 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 fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat” (Acts 10:11-13). Peter did not assume from this vision that God was now cleansing unclean animals for man's consumption. He replied to the voice that spoke from heaven, “. . . Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean” (v. 14). “And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common” (v. 15). Even with this Peter was not convinced. “Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean. . .” (V. 17).

Prior to receiving this vision an angel had instructed Cornelius, a Gentile officer in the Roman army, to send for Peter. While Peter doubted the meaning of the vision, “. . . behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate” (Acts 10:17). The Holy Spirit then told Peter, “Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them” (v. 20). When Peter arrived at the home of Cornelius, he found a crowd of people awaiting his arrival. Cornelius had been told that Peter would tell him, “. . . what thou oughtest to do” (vv. 3-6). Peter immediately grasped the significance and meaning of the vision. He said, “. . . Ye 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 God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean” (v. 28).

Through the Apostle Peter, God had opened the door of salvation to the Gentiles. The Gentiles were now able to participate in fellowship and all the graces and blessings which God had bestowed upon those called. The Gentiles were now placed on the same spiritual level as the Jewish Christian believers. Prior to this time, Jews, Christians included, were not permitted to fellowship in the homes of Gentiles. The Jews regarded Gentiles as unclean, often referring to them as dogs, unsuitable for any physical contact. This was now changed. Peter said, “. . . Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him” (Acts 10:34-35).

This event occurred about ten years after the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The common belief that Jesus nailed the Law of God to the cross, which included the law of clean and unclean meats, is refuted in this chapter. Ten years after everything had supposedly been nailed to the cross, Peter said, “. . . Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean” (Acts 10:14). Peter did not believe the Law of God had been “done away.” He was still obeying the commands regarding clean and unclean animals! Acts 10 has nothing to do with the law of clean and unclean meats. It has to do with opening the door of salvation to the Gentiles. The vision which Peter saw was a symbol, a very vivid

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symbol, to make him realize that God was now placing His hand of blessing upon the righteous Gentiles. The Christian church accepted God's will in this matter, for we read, "When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life" (Acts 11:18).

1 Timothy 4:1-5

Many view the Apostle Paul as the one who freed Christianity from the yoke of Jewish law. Did he free Christians from the law of clean and unclean meats by what he wrote in 1 Timothy 4:1-5? What did Paul mean in verse 4 when he said, "For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving"? In this chapter Paul begins by revealing what will take place in the "latter times," that is, in the last days. He said an apostasy would occur, that there would be a departure from the truth, that many would give themselves over to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons. People would be hindered in marriage (forbidden here means hindered), and would be commanded to abstain from meats (foods) which God created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. Then Paul states what was just quoted, "For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving." Did Paul mean that it is now permissible to eat whatever we wish, even unclean meats?

Notice carefully what Paul stated in verse three. People would be commanded to abstain from foods which had been created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. Jesus, in praying to the Father, said, "thy word is truth" (John 17:17). Who knows the truth? The called of God who understand what is written in both the Old and New Testaments. They know that Jesus said, ". . . It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4). In 1 Timothy 4:4 Paul uses the biggest little word in the English language-if. He said, "For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving." Why did he say this? Because it places a condition on "every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused." The condition is that it must be sanctified by the word of God and prayer. Sanctified means that these foods were set aside for man's use by the word of God. Were any foods ever set aside for man's use? Yes, indeed! Read Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14. These chapters contain the law of clean and unclean meats. Clean meats have been set aside for man's use. Not so with unclean meats. They cannot be cleansed by prayer because they were never set aside by God for man to eat. God would not receive a prayer of thanksgiving for something He forbids man to eat, but He certainly would for food He has sanctified or set apart for man.

What Paul is stating in these verses is that some would forbid eating even that which God created for man's use. These rules and regulations Paul says are the doctrines of demons. God intended man to live by all His word. The Old Testament is God's word. It includes laws of health. The law of clean and unclean meats was given to protect man's health. We have already seen in the material presented in the above paragraphs how harmful unclean flesh is. Those who add to God's word by prohibiting what God has made for man will have much to answer for.

What About Meat Sacrificed to Idols?

The text in 1 Corinthians 10:25 has been taken by some to justify eating unclean meats. It states: "Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake." Does this mean that without hesitation we should eat whatever is placed before us?

The answer is found by examining the context, that is, what is the chapter explaining? A look at the chapter reveals the following. For the Christian, an idol has no significance or importance (v. 19). Therefore, it is not necessary to ask whether meat sold in the public meat market (the shambles) had previously been offered to an idol (v. 25). If one is asked to attend a meal, the Christian should feel free to

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eat what is placed before him without being concerned whether or not the meat had been offered to an idol (v. 27). But, if anyone makes the comment that the meat had been offered to an idol, do not eat it (v. 28). Why? Because the conscience of a fellow Christian might be defiled? Not at all! But because of the conscience of the man who made the comment. Why? He would not likely have made any comment if he did not have some religious scruple regarding meat sacrificed to an idol. The Christian, therefore, would be partially responsible for the conduct of the man who raised the question. In 1 Corinthians 8:6-13 Paul explained why. He said there is one God only, but all men do not have this knowledge. Some weak brothers by eating meat sacrificed to an idol would defile their consciences. Paul urged the Christian brothers not to place any kind of a hindrance before a weak brother or even a Gentile (vv. 31-33). Therefore, those who understand the truth should not eat meat sacrificed to idols if a weak brother is in attendance at the meal. Meat should not be eaten if it causes a brother to stumble.

These chapters are not dealing with the subject of unclean meats. No Christian would eat unclean meat anywhere at anytime. These two chapters discuss the need to avoid setting up a stumbling block before a Christian brother and to refrain from eating meats sacrificed to idols if he were weak and had scruples against it.

Can Eating Unclean Meats Defile Us?

Christians are warned, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (1 Cor. 3:16-17). Our physical bodies are to be kept holy. Christians are God's Temple. "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of [conduct]" (1 Pet. 1:15). Can we conduct ourselves properly by eating that which God has forbidden? What we eat defines, in part, our relationship with God. Do our appetites and tastes control us or are we led by the Spirit of God? Those who eat unclean meats as a result of ignorance incur a physical penalty only. Those who knowingly eat unclean meats incur both a physical and spiritual penalty. To violate the Law of God knowingly is far worse than doing so ignorantly (Luke 12:47-48). To do so knowingly is lust. What does the Bible say about lust? ". . . I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet" (Rom. 7:7). To violate the commands of God is sin (1 John 3:4). What is the result of sin? "For the wages of sin is death . . ." (Rom. 6:23). Therefore, to defile the Temple of God-our bodies-is to commit sin. The end result is death. The Christian should not allow his appetite to decide right from wrong. God's law has already done that. It is our duty to live by every word of God. A part of that word forbids the eating of unclean animals. It has been pointed out in this article how harmful unclean flesh is for the human body. Coveting is the sin of participating in that which is forbidden or harmful for us. The Tenth Commandment is violated when one lusts or covets by eating unclean meat.

Those who interpret Matthew 15:1-20 to mean Jesus cleansed unclean meat had better take another look. What is the meaning of His statement in verse 11, "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man"? Take a look at the context. The Pharisees accused Jesus' disciples of not washing their hands before eating (v. 2). The Pharisees regarded this as a form of defilement. Jesus explained, "Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth 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 proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man" (Matt. 15:17-20). The subject under consideration here is not eating unclean meats. It has to do with eating before washing one's hands. Defilement, Jesus said, was a matter of what is in the human heart and mind.

Clearly, the Bible teaching is that those meats which the Old Testament defines as unclean should not be eaten under any circumstances. To do so defiles the temple of God's Spirit-these marvelous bodies of

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ours which God has created.