

# Did the Early Church Teach That the Law of Clean and Unclean had Been Changed?

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The First Covenant ordinances requiring the sacrifice of certain animals to the One True God, prefigured the sacrifice of Christ who would come as an acceptable offering, thus fulfilling the law regarding the use of animals as a substitute for the sins of the people (Mt. 5:17 cf. Heb. 9:11-15).

The law which provides a substitute atonement (covering) for sin was known from the beginning of man's history (Gen. 4:3-5 cf. 8:20), and it preceded the law given at Mt. Sinai during the time of Moses.

The terms clean and unclean are used because only God can determine what is acceptable for his people to present when they come to worship before Him (Lev. 11:1-23; De. 14:2-20 cf. Isa. 65:1-4). God commanded that specific parts of clean animals were to be eaten by his servants the Levites (Ex. 29:26-28). Even animals deemed to be clean could be regarded as an abomination if they were offered with any noticeable defect (De. 17:1), because these animals were a type of the sacrifice of Christ who was offered without spot or blemish (Heb. 9:14; 1Pet. 1:19). In other words, Christ was blameless having committed no sin (2Cor. 5:21 cf. Isa. 53:9). Therefore, animals that were clean and without blemish were a type of the perfect sacrifice to come - Christ.

As clean animals were taken into the Temple for the purpose of being offered to God, and as these same animals could be eaten by God's people, they pictured an important spiritual lesson. That lesson teaches God's people to discern, on a daily basis, what God regards as clean or unclean, in other words, what God

deems to be holy or profane. Unclean animals represent a sinful way of life which God's people are to avoid. When falling short of this ideal, they could offer a clean animal (i.e. something that represented being sinless) given on their behalf in order to reconcile them to God. Unclean animals are also a type of the fallen host of heaven (Mt. 10:1; Mk. 6:7; Rev. 18:2), who are to be avoided (1Cor. 6:18; Jas. 4:7).



AGAIN, A SECOND TIME, A VOICE  
SAID TO HIM, "WHAT GOD HAS MADE  
CLEAN, YOU MUST NOT CALL  
COMMON.  
[Acts 10:15](#)

As the physical temple system is no longer in effect, and true Christians now are the Temple of God (1Cor. 3:16-17; 6:19-20; 2Cor. 6:16), why would we introduce unclean meat into that temple?

Many people who claim to be Christian misinterpret Peter's vision in Acts 10, believing that God changed His law regarding clean and unclean animals, when in reality it confirms that the early church continued keeping this commandment as Peter himself stated (Ac. 10:14). God used the spiritual principle behind unclean animals to show the early church that Gentiles, who were previously regarded as unclean, are now regarded as clean (Ac. 10:15-16; cf. Mt. 15:21-28), and can be grafted into the spiritual nation of Israel (Rom. 11:11-36).

In Mark 7:15-23, Christ describes the digestive process which cleanses impurities in food and eliminates waste, explaining that sin is not caused by physical things such as dirt on the hands (which the digestive system cleans out), but rather, the thoughts and actions which proceed out of a person. Messiah did not here "declare all foods clean" as is suggested by

some altered Greek manuscripts. Firstly, Christ did not speak or do his own will but his Father's only (Jn. 5:30; 6:38). Secondly, the laws concerning clean and unclean meat (and all of God's Laws), remain intact as God does not change (Mal. 4:4) and as Christ himself said; cf. Mt. 5:17-19. Thirdly, the vision of Peter removes any doubt that the law remains as the vision pertained to Gentiles formerly considered unclean by the Jews and not to unclean meat.

If Christ were to advocate changing his Father's law regarding clean and unclean meat, he would have sinned and not qualified as an acceptable sacrifice.

This document is the collaborative work of individuals who believe God's truth should be given freely (Mt. 10:8; 1Cor. 2:12; 2Cor.11:7; Rom. 10:14-21) and the message of the one true God should be made available to all nations (Mt. 24:14) as a prerequisite to the return of Jesus Christ as King of kings (Mt. 17:10; 19:17; Mk. 9:11; Lk. 1:17; Rev. 19:11-16).

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