

Every Kind of Animal Allowed for Food

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(*Genesis 9:3; Romans 14:14, 20; & 1Corinthians 10:25*)

Certain Kinds of Animals Prohibited for Food
(*Deuteronomy 14:7-8*)

There is a basic overriding principle in Holy Scripture regarding what Almighty God deems as clean or unclean. Sinners are regarded as unclean, spiritually speaking, until they repent of sin and are baptized by immersion in water. Following repentance and baptism, a sinner is cleansed of all their past sins and God no longer regards them as being unclean (Isa. 1:18). However no animal can sin, let alone repent of sin and become baptized. Therefore, if God states that an animal is unclean for the purpose of sacrifice, or human consumption, it will always be unclean. It cannot repent of sin and become clean, spiritually speaking (Jer. 13:23a). This sounds simplistic, but it is nonetheless a reality that is lost on those who insist they can eat animals that God has designated as unclean.

There are a number of reasons to avoid consuming unclean animals and in every instance it is for man's benefit. However, as mankind is rebellious toward God's commands, the instructions regarding which animals can be consumed and which are to be avoided have been ignored by the majority of mankind.

Because the carnal mind is enmity (hostile) against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be (Rom. 8:7; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted; Ed. note in parenthesis).

The scriptures that are used to claim that every kind of animal is allowed for food will now be examined. The first example deals, in a general sense, with all animals and plants. The overriding theme has to do with man's authority over both the plant and animal kingdoms. Very few people would argue that mankind can eat every plant that is on the earth because some are toxic and can cause death. The same principle applies to living creatures. For instance, the puffer-fish is lethal because it has tetrodotoxin which is 1,200 times more poisonous than cyanide. There is enough toxin in one pufferfish to kill 30 adult humans and there is no known antidote. Consequently, God would not state that all creatures can be eaten because many of them would cause harm if consumed.

However, some animals that God's has declared unclean are useful in transporting food for human beings. For instance, donkeys and horses are unclean, but as beasts of burden they have been used to transport food for human consumption over thousands of years. It is only in recent history that mankind has developed various technologies replacing these animals as the primary source of transporting food.

Every living and crawling thing shall provide food (SHD 402; meat, fire and fuel; cf. Eze. 15:4, 6) for you, no less than the foliage of plants (Gen. 9:3; The Jerusalem Bible).

The Hebrew word translated into the English word "meat" or "food" can also include fire and fuel. Therefore, both plants and animals can provide mankind with more than just food. In fact, plants have provided heat, artificial light, and other energy requirements through coal, firewood, and oil. Whales were a main source of light and heat in the centuries before electricity was developed.

As far as insects (every living and crawling thing) are concerned, mankind relies on bees, wasps, beetles, and butterflies to pollinate various food crops. The same principle applies to some birds like hummingbirds that pollinate plants and flowers. Certain insects, such as grasshoppers, can be consumed based on God's word (Lev. 11:22; Mt. 3:4).

Prior to the scripture in Genesis 9:3, Noah was told which animals could be used for human consumption as well as offerings that were acceptable to Almighty God (Gen. 7:2-3, 8-9). Therefore, he knew the instructions in Genesis 9:3 did not give him permission to eat every plant and animal on the earth. Instead, he had authority to domesticate some of them for transportation and plowing fields. Horses have been used for thousands of years to plow fields that provide grain and other crops for human consumption,

Then Noah built an altar to the Lord, and **took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar** (Gen. 8:20; emphasis added).

The same instructions God gave to Noah were repeated much later to an entire nation of people during the time of Moses (Dt. 14:2-20) and the command continued past the time of Jesus Christ because the Apostle Peter stated emphatically that he avoided eating unclean animals.

Then he (Peter) became very hungry and wanted to eat; but while they made ready, he fell into a trance ¹¹and saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to earth. ¹²In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. ¹³And a voice came to him, 'Rise, Peter, kill and eat.' ¹⁴**But Peter**

said, 'Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean.' (Ac. 10:10-14; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

God used the vision of unclean animals, metaphorically, to reinforce the fact that Gentile people, who were previously regarded as unclean, could now repent of their sins and be forgiven, or cleansed, based on the sacrifice of the Lamb of God (Jn. 1:29, 36). The fact that a lamb was used symbolically to represent Jesus Christ proves beyond any doubt that God still regarded certain animals as clean while others are unclean (Dt. 14:6).

The last scripture, in Romans 14:14, used to claim that unclean animals can now be eaten, has nothing to do with unclean animals at all. Instead, the context is dealing with meat offered to pagan idols. It was not uncommon during the first century CE for some of the meat, offered in pagan sacrificial ceremonies, to be sold later in marketplace stalls. Paul pointed out that it was still just meat and where it came from was irrelevant, unless a church member was offended because he discovered it was previously part of an idolatrous sacrifice. In which case, Paul instructed church members to avoid eating this meat as it may cause someone who was weaker in the faith to be offended. Paul was not advocating the consumption of unclean animals and not every animal offered in pagan sacrifices was unclean (1Kgs. 18:25-26). In the ancient Indies religion of Vedism, eleven he-goats would be sacrificed, and goats are considered clean animals according to Deuteronomy 14:6.

Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one. ⁵For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth [as there are many gods and many lords], ⁶yet for us (church

members) there is only one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live. ⁷However, there is not in everyone that knowledge; for some, with consciousness of the idol, until now eat it as a thing offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled (1Cor. 8:4-7; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Therefore, if food (offered to idols) makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble (1Cor. 8:13; Ed. note in parenthesis).



FOR I AM THE LORD, I DO NOT CHANGE...

Malachi 3:6a; emphasis added

I (Paul) know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself (through association with a pagan sacrifice); but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean (i.e. to be avoided). ¹⁵Yet if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died (Rom. 14:14-15; Ed. notes in parentheses).

But he who doubts (i.e. through misunderstanding or weakness of faith) is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith (is not fully convinced he is doing the right thing); for whatever is not from faith is sin (Rom. 14:23; Ed. notes in parentheses).

The last four scriptural references just quoted do not give anyone permission to break God's law regarding animals that are acceptable for human consumption. Instead, they are dealing with meat offered in pagan sacrifices, which was not uncommon during the time of the early church. Therefore, God has not changed His law regarding unclean animals and anyone eating

animals that He stated are to be avoided is committing sin.

For I am the Lord, I do not change... (Mal. 3:6a; emphasis added).

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from **the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation** (SGD 3883 – change) or shadow of turning (Jas. 1:17; emphasis added; see study: Did the Early Church Teach that the Law of Clean and Unclean Had Been Changed?).

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