

Living in Grace, Love & Obedience

Walking in Faith and the Commandments of God

**“Here is the endurance of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus Christ”
Revelation 12:17**



Have God's Dietary Instructions been done away with?

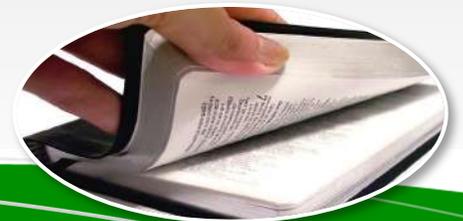
This study discusses the dietary instructions that God gave His people (Hebrews and foreigners) and asks if they apply to believers today. Throughout the scriptures and the apostolic writings we see our Father is concerned with what we think, what we say and what we do. So is it possible that He is also concerned about what we eat? Does He care what His bride puts into her body? These are the questions that we will address in this newsletter.

We hope you enjoy the following information.

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What is the difference between eating Biblically versus Kosher?

Eating biblically involves the simple and clear-cut distinction between 'clean' and 'unclean' foods for dietary purposes as seen in Leviticus 11. Kosher involves the same instructions found in Lev 11 however there are additional rules for slaughtering and other things, like not eating meat and dairy together, etc. If you have never read Leviticus 11 we highly recommend it and then ask God what you should do.

But didn't Jesus declare all animals clean in Mark 7:18-20?



Many believers today in American Christianity have been taught that we can eat whatever we want because Jesus did away with the food laws because He declared all foods were clean reference Mark 7:18-20 (NIV).

“... Don't you see that nothing that enters a person from the outside can defile them? For it doesn't go into their heart but into their stomach, and then out of the body.” In saying this, Jesus declared all foods clean.”

However there is a problem with that last phrase, “In saying this, Jesus declared all foods clean” is not found in the earliest Greek manuscripts. Rather translators added it over time. We see the added phrase “cleansing all foods” does not mean we can eat everything we want, but Yeshua's reference meant that food (things that God declared as good for food ref. Lev 11) was simply carried off by the digestive tract. The Syrian translation reads more clearly: “... carrying off all that is eaten”.

The context is Yeshua rebuking the Pharisees who instituted a hand washing tradition that was not found in scripture. If a person did not ritually wash their hands they were ritually unclean and could enter into the temple, which was never commanded by God. This is what Yeshua was correcting.

Can animals be Contaminated, Unclean or both?

What the Sages taught...

The word tumah refers to impurity and has two meanings, depending on the context. Most often it refers to the spiritual contamination that can be conveyed to people or things. At other times, as in Leviticus 11 it refers primarily to forbidden foods as being unclean.

Thus, when the Torah describes an animal as ‘unclean’, it has nothing to do with contamination from another animal. In fact no living animal can ever be tamei (contaminated). Even if a horse carries a human corpse on its back, the animal is not tamei in the sense of contamination; however it is tamei (unclean) in that it is considered forbidden as food.

Learn more about God's dietary instructions by reading Leviticus 11.



Why are we to follow God's food laws?
Let's look at Leviticus 11:44-45.

“For I am the Lord your God. You shall therefore consecrate yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I am holy.

These verses come immediately after God instructs the mixed multitude (Hebrews and foreigners) on what is good for food and what is not. Something to think about.

Did Paul tell Timothy to Eat everything?

Many believers point to 1 Timothy 4:1-5 as proof that we can eat whatever we want. Let's take a look at this passage...

“... in latter times some will depart from the faith giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons... forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving... for ever creature of God is good and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.”

There are two ways in which an animal is good for food. First, God's word that defines what animals are good for ‘food’ and what is not. Second, this ‘food’ is received with thanksgiving and prayer. If one of these two things are not followed then its not good to consume. The biggest problem people have is rejecting what God says is good for food as seen in Leviticus 11. Keep reading this newsletter because we will see how important God's food laws in the New Millennium.

What animals are Clean and Unclean?

Leviticus 11 & Deuteronomy 14

Throughout scripture we see God is concerned about what we think, say and do; how we interact with Him and those around us. He also calls us to be holy and set apart. So is it a stretch to think that He cares about what we eat? In this article we will look at the food laws, what is clean and unclean, and if God's dietary instructions are for believers today.

What is Clean and Unclean according to scripture? God defines what is good for food and what is not in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14. What is interesting is that while these commandments were given at Mount Sinai, we see they were known long before by Noah in Genesis 7. So what animals are clean (good for food) and what is not, according to scripture?

Clean land animals that have split hooves and chews the cud are good for food. These include Antelope, Bison, Cattle, Caribou, Deer, Elk, Gazelle, Giraffe, Goat, Hart, Ibex, Moose, Ox, Reindeer and Sheep. However unclean animals include Armadillo, Badger, Bear, Beaver, Camel, Elephant, Ferret, Gorilla, Groundhog, Hippopotamus, Kangaroo, Llama (Alpaca), Coney, Hare (rabbit), Mole, Monkey, Mouse, Muskrat, Opossum, Porcupine, Rabbit, Raccoon, Rat, Rhinoceros, Skunk, Squirrel, Wallaby, Weasel, Wolverine, Coyote, Dog, Fox, Hyena, Jackal, Wolf, Cat, Cheetah, Leopard, Lion, Panther, Tiger, Donkey, Horse, Mule, Onager, Zebra, Boar, Peccary and Pig.

Clean fish must have scales and fins. Such as Albacore, Alewives, Anchovy, Barracuda, Bass, Black Drum, Black Pomfret, Bluebacks,



"Study to show yourself approved"

Bluebill Sunfish, Bluefish, Bluegill, Blue Runner, Bonita, Bowfin, Buffalofish, Butterfish, Carp, Cod, Crappie, Drum, Founder, Garfish, Grouper, Grunts, Gulf Pike, Haddock, Halibut, Herring, Kingfish Mackerel, Mahimahi, Menhaden, Minnow, Mullet, Perch, Pickerel, Pig Fish, Pike, Pollock, Pompano, Redfish, Rockfish, Redfin, Red Snapper, Robalo, Salmon, Sardine, Sea Bas, Sergeant Fish, Silver Hake, Sunfish, Smelt, Snapper, Snook, Sole, Steelhead, Striped Bass, Tarpon, Trout, Tuna, Whitefish, Whiting and Yellow Perch all fit this category. However Bullhead, Catfish, Eel, Turbot, Marlin, Paddlefish, Shark, Stickleback, Sturgeon, Swordfish, Dolphin, Otter, Porpoise, Seal, Walrus, Whale, Abalone, Clam, Conch, Crab, Crayfish, Lobster, Mussel, Oyster, Prawn, Scallop, Shrimp, Cuttlefish, Jellyfish, Limpet, Octopus and Squid are not good to eat.

Clean birds are Chicken, Dove, Duck, Goose, Grouse, Guinea, Partridge, Peacock, Peafowl, Pheasant, Pigeon, Prairie Chicken, Ptarmigan, Quail, Sagehen, Songbirds, Sparrow, Teal and Turkey. However following are 'unclean' birds most of which are all predatory and scavenger birds (birds that can eat meat and or dead and rotting corpses), Albatross, Bat, Bittern, Buzzard, Condor, Coot, Cormorant, Crane, Crow, Cuckoo, Eagle, Falcon, Flamingo, Ostrich, Grosbeak, Gull, Hawk, Heron, Hoopoe, Kite, Lapwing, Loon, Magpie, Osprey, Ossifrage, Owl, Parrot, Pelican, Penguin, Plover, Rail, Raven, Roadrunner, Sandpiper, Seagull, Stork, Swallow, Swift, Water Hen, Woodpecker and Vulture.

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Does God care about what we eat?

Continued from page 3... Creatures that creep on the ground which are unclean are Slugs, Snails, Worms, Frogs, Newt, Salamander, Toad, Alligator, Caiman, Chameleon, Crocodile, Lizard, Snake and Turtle. All insects are unclean with the exception of Crickets, Grasshoppers and Locusts – they are considered clean and fit for food (but I probably won't be trying them anytime soon).

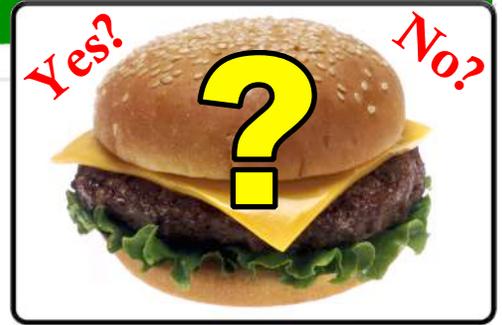
Does God care about what we eat?

Parents have you ever experienced this? Its dinnertime and your children are fussing again. They whine about eating good food that will help them grow up big and strong. However they can't see that – they only want cookies, cake and junk food, which is not good for them. Lord willing they will eventually grow to understand how important good nutrition is. Those that have a healthy diet generally live healthier lives than those who don't.

Another situation – how many times have we heard or know someone who have had health issues and went to the doctor. After a series of tests the doctor tells them that their current diet is an obstacle to good health. He prescribes a new diet that reduces the amount of fatty foods (like pork), cuts out the junk food, to eat more veggies, etc. Now if we take the doctor's advice we can experience a reduction in our cholesterol, losing those unwanted pounds and minimize the symptoms of many diseases. If we continue along this regiment things get better; we even tell our family and friends about it. We might even brag about it.

So why when the Creator of heaven and earth, who knows all things, gives us instructions on what to eat and not eat, why do we ignore His instructions? Many claim its because Jesus did away with all those instructions.

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What about Meat and Cheese?

Many believers think that if you follow God's dietary instructions, it means you can't eat cheeseburgers. According to Jewish rules and traditions of kosher, the word kosher comes from the Hebrew word kasher meaning 'fit' as in 'fit for consumption'. Kosher meat also requires following certain slaughtering rules where the flesh of the animal is not torn by any nicks or dents in a knife that is used to kill the animal, to prevent any undue suffering.

Rabbinic rulings state one cannot eat meat and cheese together. This taken from Exodus 23:19, 34:26 & Deut 14:21 which says...

"You shall not seethe (boil) a kid (a young goat) in its mother's milk"

However we see Abraham who obeyed God's voice and commandments (ref. Gen 26:5), feed the three divine messengers (the preincarnate Messiah and two angels), meat and dairy as we see in Gen 18:8.

So if it was a command to not eat meat or cheese then surely one of the three visitors would have corrected Abraham but they did not. So what does Exodus 23:19 mean?

Local pagans had a ritual where they would boil a pregnant goat in its mother's milk as part of a fertility ritual. This 'stew' then spread over a field in hopes their false gods would give them a good harvest. So it's not about not eating cheeseburgers but not following the practices of pagan rituals. I hope this clears up the confusion of the rabbinic meat and cheese ruling.

Does God care about what we eat? Part 2

Here is another way of looking at the topic of God's food laws. We are created in God's image, so why do we think we know better than Him on what we feed our body, which is a temple? Still having problems? Here is another analogy.

I have a friend who is a big NASCAR fan. He knows all the drivers, what cars and all the technical details of the engines, how they perform, etc. These engines are fine-tuned and require high grade fuel. The reasons for that is so the drivers can push the car to the limit and get every bit of speed and efficiency so they can compete and win the race. My friend is also a believer but did not see the reason to follow God's instructions when it comes to food, so I asked him the following.

Me: John, what would happen if you put regular unleaded gasoline in one of those cars?

John rolled his eyes and said: That would be stupid because the engines are specifically made to use high-grade fuel. If you used regular gasoline the driver would not be able to take advantage of the engines design and he would not be able to keep up with the other drivers.

Me: But if the driver did use regular gasoline could he finish the race?

John: Yes could finish but he probably wouldn't win the race.

Me: Well John, it's the same way with what we put in our body; God created us in His image. We are the finely tuned 'race car'. Now we can put regular gas (unclean food) in our 'tank' (stomach) and while it won't disqualify us from the race, our performance will suffer. If we eat what God tells us to eat, His word tells that He will bless us and that it will go well with us, and our children forever. However if we disobey the One who designed the 'engine' we will probably have some problems

down the road.

John then started to understand why God tells us what is good for food and what is not.

What amazes me is that you can visit denominations across the United States and find hundreds of thousands who are defiling the temple of God; many drink excessively, others smoke, and even more don't eat healthy foods. And we see the results all around us. How many times do we take prayer requests for those in congregations who are sick and diseased? Could it possibly be the result of not obeying and eating what God commanded? God is not a hard taskmaster. He is a loving Father who wants the best for us, just like a parent who wants their children to grow up healthy and strong. But how are we to treat those who don't follow the food laws?

Now sometimes those who obey the food laws look down upon those that don't and this is not good. As long as believers follow basics outlined in Acts 15:19-21 (abstain from idols, sexual immorality, things strangled and from consuming blood) they are still in the faith. They should continue to study and apply God's word in their lives. However we are not to reject or look down on those who do not walk exactly as we do. Everyone is on a journey and many times God deals with us about different things, at different times.

The goal is unity within the body, to encourage and bless people, to preach the gospel, make disciples, take care of orphans, widows and visit those in prison, till the Messiah returns. We should never disassociate with other believers because they don't eat like we want them to.

If someone is truly interested in learning why you observe certain things, show them the scriptures and how they are a blessing to you. If they don't agree, that's okay. At least you gave an answer.

Do we see God's dietary instructions in the New Millennium?

If God's dietary instructions were done away with when Yeshua lived, died and was resurrected, then we should not see any rebukes or judgments about them in the New Millennium passages written by the prophets. So what do we see?

In Isaiah we see God's judgment and rebukes in the following verses Isaiah 65:1-7...

"I (God) said "Here I am, here I am to a nation that was not called by My name... who walk in a way that is not good... a people who provoke Me to anger continually to My face; who sacrifice in gardens... who eat swine's flesh and the broth of abominable things is in heir vessels (bodies)... who say "keep to yourself, do not come near me, for I am holier than you!" These are smoke in My nostrils, a fire that burns all the day."

This is a New Millennial passage and its clear God will judge those who not only make rebellious sacrifices but also those who eat swine and other abominations. Ok, that's just one passage, do we see another?

Yes we do in chapter 66...

Isaiah 66:15-24 "See, the Lord is coming with fire, and His chariots are like a whirlwind; He will bring down His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire. For with fire and with His sword the Lord will execute judgment on all people, and many will be those slain by the Lord. 'Those who consecrate and purify

themselves to go into the gardens, following one who is among those who eat the flesh of pigs, rats and other unclean things – they will meet their end together with the one they follow,' declares the Lord... 'As for the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before me,' declares the Lord, 'so will your name and descendants endure. From one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all mankind will come and bow down before Me,' says the Lord. 'And they will go out and look on the dead bodies of those who rebelled against Me; the worms that eat them will not die, the fire that burns them will not be quenched, and they will be loathsome to all mankind'.

So since we see rebukes and judgment of people who eat unclean foods (swine, rats, etc), then that proves God's dietary instructions are still in force to some degree.

However we should keep the dietary laws because we love God and not because we're scared of judgment. Keeping His commandments its just another way to love God as we see in 1 John 5:1-3. Study and pray on what God wants you to do.



"One ordinance shall be for you of the assembly and for the stranger who dwells with you, an ordinance forever throughout your generations; as you are, so shall the stranger be before the Lord." Numbers 15:15

Did Peter's vision in Acts 10 prove we can eat Everything?

Most believers say that Peter's vision of all the animals proves that the food laws were done away with. Lets look at Acts 10:9-16...

"Peter went up on the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour. Then he became very hungry and wanted to eat... but he fell into a trance... and an object like a great sheet bound at four corners, descending to him... In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things and birds of the air. And a voice came to him, 'Rise, Peter; kill and eat.' But Peter said, 'Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean.'" And a voice spoke to him again a second time, 'What God has cleansed you must not call common.' This was done three time."

Immediately following this vision, three men from Cornelius' household came to get Peter. Cornelius was Roman centurion who feared God, gave generously and prayed to God always. God sent an angel to him and told Cornelius to get Peter, for some really good news.

Eventually Peter preached the gospel/good news to Cornelius and his household. This resulted in all of them being 'saved'. Then to top it off, God poured out His Holy Spirit on them as well as seen in verses 44-48. This pouring out on non-Jews was part of the fulfillment of Joel 2 where God said He would pour out His spirit upon all flesh.

The problem today is many believers think God's vision is all about doing away with the food laws found in Leviticus 11. However this is not the case. Why? Because how God taught Peter was in a Hebraic way. God reaffirmed His commandments through the vision, which contrasted with the commandments and traditions of men as we see in Acts 10:28-29...

Peter said to Cornelius... "You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. BUT God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean. There I came without objection as soon as I was sent for..."

The Pharisees kept a rabbinic ruling that if an unclean animal touched a clean animal, the clean animal was considered unclean and could not be eaten by a Jew or they would become unclean.

They even ruled if a Jew had contact with, went into a non-Jews house or even ate with them, the Jew was contaminated and considered ritually unclean for an extended period of time (and could not enter the Temple), just as we saw in Acts 10:28-29. This ruling and mindset is also seen when the Jewish leaders took Yeshua to Praetorium (Pilate's court)...

"Then they (the religious leaders) led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium, and it was early morning. But they themselves did not go into the Praetorium, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover. Pilate then went out to them..." John 18:28-29

We see concern of contamination when Yeshua drove out the money changers from the temple ref. Matthew 21:12-14. After He drove them out He said God's house was to be "a house of prayer for all nations" (Yeshua quoted Isaiah 56:6-8). This leads us to believe that the religious leaders had kicked the foreigners out so they could not access the temple.

Now in Acts 10:34-35 Peter again said his vision was not about food but "... In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him."

However great this was, Peter was confronted for his encounter with Cornelius by the brethren...

"Now the apostles and brethren... heard the gentiles had also received the word of God... they said... "You went in to uncircumcised men and ate with them!" Acts 11:1-3

Peter recounted the event how the Gentiles became believers, were baptized with water and the Holy Spirit. When the other apostles and brethren heard this they glorified God saying... "Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life." Acts 11:18

So we see that Peter's vision was not about doing away with God's dietary laws but that "To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins." as seen in Acts 10:43. Shalom

“I can Eat all things according to Colossians 2:16-17?”

Because it says...“So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.”

This seems to be the ‘silver bullet’ proving we can eat anything we want because Paul is the Apostle to the gentiles. But when we read the verses directly after these (verses 18-23) we see Paul is addressing the false teachings the Colossia assembly were confronting. Notice what Paul was addressing...

“Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind... Therefore if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world do you subject yourselves to regulations – ‘Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle’ which all concern things which perish... according to the commandments and doctrines of men? These things have the appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.” Colossians 2:18-23

The question we must ask is this “Are the commandments of God (including the dietary instructions) based on worldly principles? No. Are the dietary instructions, Sabbaths and feasts according to the commandments and doctrines of men? No. They are all the commandments and doctrine of God. Consider the following...

“For I give you good doctrine: Do not forsake my torah (law)” Proverbs 4:2

“Jesus answered them and said, ‘My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me.” John 7:16

“One who turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination” Proverbs 28:9

“Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and your law is truth.” Psalm 119:142

“You shall have the same law for the stranger and for one from you own country; for I am the Lord your God.” Leviticus 24:22

“Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, then you will have good success.” Joshua 1:7-8

“Give me understanding, and I shall keep your law; indeed, I shall observe it with my whole heart” Psalm 119:34

“Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord when I will make a new covenant... I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people... For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.” Jeremiah 31:31-34

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete thoroughly equipped for every good work.” 2 Timothy 3:16-17

So the things Paul is warning those at Colossia are the teachings and works of the Gnostics. The Gnostics had sects that worshipped angels and promoted an esoteric lifestyle of fasting, abstaining from feasts or celebrating in any form or fashion. They equated denying the body of all earthly pleasures to being holy and spiritually enlightened. Of course many of the feasts of the Lord, His Sabbaths and festivals involve lots of food and celebrations but the Gnostics rejected God's commandments and instead developed and promoted their own doctrines and commandments of men, which is what Paul was warning about. Paul was not giving permission to disobey the dietary commandments but rather to encourage them to continue in them, no matter what those around them were doing.

So know that you know a little about the dietary instructions, please read, study and pray on what God wants you to do till the Messiah returns. Shalom