

BIBLICALLY CLEAN FOODS

Should Believers Be On A Diet?



Richard H. Harris III

© Copyright 1994-2001, All Rights Reserved

INTRODUCTION.

The question of clean and unclean foods in the Bible has been a subject of very little attention throughout most of Christian history. Mainstream denominations have largely taught that these Old Testament dietary commandments do not apply to the New Testament Believer because they were "nailed to the cross." Within the last several decades, however, this teaching has come under increased scrutiny due to the appearance of a number of Christian denominations and sects which teach otherwise. Not only do these groups teach that the dietary commandments were not done away with, but they also insist that they are applicable for the New Testament Believer.

This study will examine the issue from a non-denominational point of view. It will first explore the dietary commandments, themselves, and highlight the Biblical rationale for them. It will then scrutinize applicable New Testament verses to determine whether or not they provide a scriptural basis for negating the dietary commandments with respect to the New Testament Believer.

The study proceeds upon the premise that the Bible is the inspired Word of the Almighty and does not contradict itself. The author strongly recommends that the reader pause at this time to ask the Almighty Creator for wisdom, understanding, and discernment. May His truth, and not the author's opinion, be found by every reader.

All scripture verses will be quoted from the King James Version unless otherwise specified. The name of the Messiah will be rendered from the original Hebrew "Yahoshua"¹ rather than the traditional English word "Jesus." The English word "God" will be rendered throughout the study as "Elohim," from the original Hebrew.

¹See the study entitled, WHAT'S IN A NAME???

CLEAN AND UNCLEAN FOR THE OLD TESTAMENT BELIEVER.

The Elohim of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Exodus 3:6) was meticulously specific in His instructions regarding what was proper and improper for His people to eat. His dietary commandments are enumerated both in Leviticus and in Deuteronomy and are as follows:

And Yahowah spake unto Moses and to Aaron, saying unto them, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, **These *are* the beasts which ye shall eat** among all the beasts that *are* on the earth. 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 eat**, and their carcass shall ye not touch; they *are* unclean to you. **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**: They shall be even an abomination unto you; ye shall not eat of their flesh, but ye shall have their carcasses in abomination. Whatsoever hath no fins nor scales in the waters, that **shall be** an abomination unto you. 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 osprey. And the vulture, and the kite after his kind; Every raven after his kind; And the owl, and the night hawk, and the cuckoo, 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. Yet **these may ye eat** of every **flying creeping thing that goeth upon all four, which have legs above their feet**, to leap withal upon the earth; **Even these of them ye may eat**; the locust after his kind, and the bald locust after his kind, and the beetle after his kind, and the grasshopper after his kind. But all *other* flying creeping things, which have four feet, **shall be** an abomination unto you. And for these ye shall be unclean: whosoever toucheth the carcass of them shall be unclean until the even. And whosoever beareth *ought* of the carcass of them shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even. **The carcasses of every beast which divideth the hoof, and is not clovenfooted, nor cheweth the cud, are unclean unto you**: every one that toucheth them shall be unclean. And **whatsoever goeth upon his paws**, among all manner of beasts that go on *all* four, those **are unclean unto**

you: whoso toucheth their carcass shall be unclean until the even. And he that beareth the carcass 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. And every earthen vessel, whereinto *any* of them falleth, whatsoever *is* in it shall be unclean; and ye shall break it. Of all meat which may be eaten, *that* on which *such* water cometh shall be unclean: and all drink that may be drunk in every *such* vessel shall be unclean. And every *thing* whereupon *any part* of their carcass falleth shall be unclean; *whether it be* oven, or ranges for pots, they shall be broken down: *for they are* unclean, and shall be unclean unto you. Nevertheless a fountain or pit, *wherein there is* plenty of water, shall be clean: but that which toucheth their carcass shall be unclean. And if *any part* of their carcass fall upon any sowing seed which is to be sown, it *shall be* clean. But if *any* water be put upon the seed, and *any part* of their carcass fall thereon, it *shall be* unclean unto you. And if any beast, of which ye may eat, die; he that toucheth the carcass thereof shall be unclean until the even. And he that eateth of the carcass of it shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even: **he** also that beareth the carcass of it shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even. And every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth *shall be* an abomination; it shall not be eaten. Whatsoever goeth upon the belly, and whatsoever goeth upon *all* four, or **whatsoever hath more feet among all creeping things** that creep upon the earth, **them ye shall not eat**; for they *are* an abomination. Ye shall not make yourselves abominable with any creeping thing that creepeth, neither shall ye make yourselves unclean with them, that ye should be defiled thereby. **For I am Yahowah your Elohim: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.** For I *am* Yahowah that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your Elohim: ye shall therefore be holy, for I *am* holy. 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. (Leviticus 11:1-47)

In determining the Biblical rationale for such specific commandments, the first thing we should notice is that the language used by the Creator is very strong. He does not merely say that certain animals should not be eaten, but that individuals doing so would somehow make themselves abominable (Leviticus 11:43). And He did not limit His commands to only the actual consumption of those meats, but even went on to say that His people were to break any utensils which came into contact with the dead carcasses of these animals!

Many of the New Testament Believers today who follow these Biblical dietary distinctions believe that the sole reason for the Creator's dietary laws was to preserve the physical health of His people. They point out, among other reasons, the fact that shellfish are higher in cholesterol than most meats and that swine, just like other scavenging animals, tend to be nondiscriminating in what they eat. But were "health reasons" the only purpose for our Father's dietary laws?

If we dig a little deeper we find that the Scriptures seem to suggest an even more important reason than the physical well being of the human body. We see, for example, in Leviticus

Ye shall therefore put difference between clean beasts and unclean, and between unclean fowls and clean: and ye **shall not make your souls abominable** by beast, or by fowl, or by any manner of living thing that creepeth on the ground, which I have separated from you as **unclean**. (Leviticus 20:25)

This passage seems to suggest that there is a spiritual aspect to clean and unclean foods--that somehow unclean foods may make our very souls abominable to our Father. Looking back to Leviticus 11:44 we see that He said, "neither shall ye defile yourselves..." But is the idea of spiritual defilement borne out by the rest of Scripture?

In the Book of Ezekiel, Elohim speaks through the prophet to render a strong rebuke to the nation of Israel. It seems that the religious leaders, themselves, had negated the distinction between the clean and the unclean.

Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they showed difference between the unclean and the clean..., and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and **I am profaned among them**. (Ezekiel 22:26)

The Almighty Creator states here that failing to observe the distinction between the clean and the unclean is one of the ways that He was profaned by His people. While the verse does not specify whether He was profaned in the earthly or the spiritual realm, the fact that He was profaned gives us some insight as to the significance of His dietary commandments. One is reminded of the similarly serious nature of the sin of King David when he caused the death of Uriah the Hittite in order to have his wife. The Almighty, through His prophet, told David that his violation of the commandments had "given great occasion to the enemies of Yahowah to blaspheme." (2 Samuel 12:14). Again, whether it was in the earthly or the spiritual realm, David's action had caused his Creator to be profaned.

The Old Testament also seems to indicate that, even at the time of the Second Coming and Judgment, the distinction between clean and unclean animals will be just as relevant as when it was given in the

Book of Leviticus. The following statement should give us all cause for deep reflection as we continue to study the issue.

For, behold, Yahowah **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 Yahowah plead with all flesh: and the slain of Yahowah 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 detestable things, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith Yahowah. (Isaiah 66:15-17)

Notice that those to be judged are not just Jews; they are of "all flesh." And all those who eat unclean things "shall be consumed together." If this passage is indeed a prophecy of the end times (when in the past did Yahowah come with fire to judge all flesh?), such treatment seems out of character with New Testament teachings. After all, wasn't the distinction between clean and unclean done away with at the cross? And furthermore, didn't the Messiah say that it was not what goes into the mouth that makes us unclean? With these questions in mind, it is probably a good time to look to the New Testament and see how it squares with Isaiah's ominous end-time prophecy concerning unclean foods.

CLEAN, UNCLEAR, AND THE NEW TESTAMENT BELIEVER.

Ever since most of us were children, we have been taught that all foods are permissible for Christians because, according to the teachings of the New Testament, "the Law was nailed to the cross." Since we are no longer "under the Law but rather under grace," as the prevailing teaching goes, we can eat anything we please. To examine the scriptural validity of this teaching, we will first look to the Messiah's own words. We will next look at Peter's rooftop vision, the writings of Paul, the Acts 15 guidance for the Gentiles, and finally to an event described in Matthew 15 and Mark 7. A careful examination of all these areas will help us determine whether or not the distinction between clean and unclean foods, and the Biblical commandments pertaining thereto, were done away with or whether they are still in effect.

The Messiah: "It's not what goes into the mouth..."

The two most often-quoted statements of the Messiah used to teach that the biblical commandments of clean and unclean foods were done away with are the following:

Then came to Yahoshua scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of Elohim by your tradition? For Elohim commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the

death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to *his* father or *his* mother, *It is* a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; And honour not his father or his mother, *he shall be free*. Thus have ye made the commandment of Elohim of none effect by your tradition. Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments² of men. And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand: **Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man**. Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying? But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. (Matthew 15:1-13)

Then came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem. And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen hands, they found fault. For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash *their* hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. And *when they come* from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, *as* the washing of cups, and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables. Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands? He answered and said unto them, Well hath Isaiah prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with *their* lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of Elohim, ye hold the tradition of men, *as* the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of Elohim, that ye may keep your own tradition. For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, *It is* Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; *he shall be free*. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; Making the word of Elohim of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye. And when he had called all the people *unto him*, he said unto them, Hearken unto me every one *of you*, and understand: **There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man**. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear. (Mark 7:1-16)

² The “commandments” of men is the Greek word “entalma.” The “commandments” of Elohim is the Greek word “entolay.” The difference between these two words will be discussed later.

In both of the passages, the words in bold seem to say that nothing we put into our mouths can defile us--a teaching which would be in direct contradiction to the dietary commandments of our Creator given in the Old Testament. But is that really what the Messiah is saying since He, Himself, kept the Law (Torah)³ perfectly. One only need look at Messiah's own words to determine how He felt about the Torah of the Almighty.

Think not that I am come to destroy the Law (Torah), or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, **Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled**. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.
(Matthew 5:17-20)

The fact of the matter is that the Messiah was NOT teaching against the Torah of the Almighty by his statements in Matthew 15 and Mark 7. If we look carefully at the passages, we will find that the questions asked by the Pharisees, and the answers given by the Messiah, were directed at another body of laws altogether! To see this we must first focus on just what problem the Pharisees had with the actions of the disciples.

And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen, hands, they found fault. For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash *their* hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. (Mark 7:2-3)

The problem was that the disciples had failed to wash their hands before eating bread in violation of the "tradition of the elders." Notice also that the specific question of the Pharisees dealt only with that one issue.

Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they wash not their hands when they eat bread. (Matthew 15:2)

The questions of the Pharisees had nothing to do with the Torah of the Almighty. They did not ask Him, "Why do thy disciples transgress the Torah?" They specifically asked Him, "Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders?"

³The word "Law" in this case is used to describe the "Law of Moses," enumerated in the first five books of the Bible. These first five books are known to most Christians by the Greek word "Pentateuch." The original Hebrew word for the Law, however, is "Torah." It is this term that will be used from here on.

The fact is that there is NO commandment in the Torah to wash one's hands before eating bread. The commandment to which the Pharisees referred IS found in the codification of the so-called "Oral Torah" (Torah Shebal Peh), which is a body of laws that was handed down by the sect of the Pharisees.⁴ This tradition is carried down even today and "observant" Jews ritually pour water three times over each hand before breaking bread. This ritual washing, which is the focus of this entire exchange, has little to do with physically cleansing the hands. It is performed to somehow spiritually cleanse the hands so that the eater of the bread will not spiritually defile himself. This teaching goes even farther in that all cups, and pots, and brazen vessels (Mark 7:4) must be dipped in ritually purifying water⁵ before they may be used for the first time.

Messiah's own words given in response to the questions of the Pharisees make it clear that He was NOT teaching against His Father's Torah commandments concerning unclean foods. As a matter of fact, His statements:

Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man." (Matthew 15:11)

There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man.
(Mark 7:15)

had nothing whatsoever to do with diet. If we consider them in context, we see that Messiah used them to level a stern rebuke at the Pharisees. In both Gospels, the verses immediately preceding Matthew 15:11 and Mark 7:15 had pointed out instances where the Pharisees had actually tried to supersede the Torah by their own "commandments of men."

Why do ye also transgress the commandment of Elohim by your tradition... Thus have ye made the commandment of Elohim of none effect by your tradition... But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men. (Matthew 15:3, 6, 9)

He answered and said unto them, Well hath Isaiah prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with *their* lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men.

⁴The set of man-made traditions handed down by the Pharisees was initially called the **Tradition of the Elders**. It was later called the Oral Torah and was recorded in the "mishna" portion of the Talmud. The portion pertaining to ritual hand washings is in the Mishna tractate "Yadayim." [See: Jewish New Testament Commentary, David H. Stern, (Clarksville, Maryland: Jewish New Testament Publications, 1992), p. 92.]

⁵The ritually purifying water is known as a "mikva." Even today, observant Jews must dip their kitchen utensils, their "pots and cups" (Mark 7:8) before using them the first time.

For laying aside the commandment of Elohim, ye hold the tradition of men... Full well ye reject the commandment of Elohim, that ye may keep your own tradition.
(Mark 7:6-9)

The very clear context of both passages is that the Pharisees were violating the Torah ("laying aside the commandment of Elohim") by their false teachings ("commandments of men"), while seeming to honor the Father "with *their* lips." These deceptive teachings were leading others astray--a fact which particularly disturbed the Messiah. It was these false teachings, which came out of the mouths of the Scribes and Pharisees, to which the Messiah was referring when He said,

Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man. (Matthew 15:11)

There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man.
(Mark 7:15)

And finally, the Messiah gave one more key clue as to the subject of His remarks. He had earlier likened the Word of His Father to seed sowed by the Father which was to produce fruitful plants. (Mark 4:14, 20). But concerning the "Oral Torah" commandments of the Pharisees, however, he made the stern proclamation

Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. (Matthew 15:13)

The Messiah stated that these "commandments of men" would be rooted up because they were not the seed (the Word) planted by the Father. We must remember that the Father's dietary commandments, as part of His Word, are planted by Him and will not be rooted up. Again, the Messiah puts the Torah of Elohim into a position of preeminence; He does not annul it.

Before we leave the words of the Messiah, we need to take a quick look at one more statement from the Gospel of Mark. Following the Messiah's discussion on ritual purity with the Pharisees, we find the following statement:

And when he was entered into the house from the people, his disciples asked him concerning the parable. And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, *it* cannot defile him; Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats? (Mark 7:17-19)

The phrase "purging all meats" is rendered "(*Thus He* declared all foods clean.)" in the NASV, NIV, etc. This verse has likewise been used to teach that Messiah cleansed anything that one might want to eat. Such a determination, however, goes beyond the context of the verse. We must remember that the 18 previous verses dealt ONLY with the pharisaic requirements of ritual purity which they applied to foods that were Biblically clean in the first place. Messiah was once again stating that failure to perform the ritual washing and preparation requirements of the Pharisees--prior to eating Biblically clean foods--would not spiritually defile a person.

We must also remember that unclean animals were not even considered to be food by the Messiah, the Pharisees, or the other participants in the conversation. They had been declared to be "an abomination" by the Father and were, therefore, de facto not "foods." Before we use the Messiah's teachings to authorize breaking any of the Creator's commandments--especially when the Messiah so zealously defended the Torah--we should consider His words very carefully. If our interpretations are wrong, then our teachings become the "traditions of men" and no better than those of the Pharisees.

(The exchange between the Messiah and the Pharisees in Luke 11:37-44 deals with the same issue of ritual washings and must be likewise interpreted in context.)

"But, not so fast!" one might say. After all, wasn't the Messiah teaching before the cross? Since the Law was not done away with until "after the cross," as the traditional teaching goes, maybe Peter and Paul will clarify the matter. Let us, therefore, see what they had to say.

Peter's Vision

We will first look at a commonly-quoted New Testament passage dealing with the rooftop vision of Peter to see how it relates to the Old Testament dietary commandments. In Acts 10:9-17, Peter had a vision about being told by the Almighty to eat unclean meats.

On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour: And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made 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 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. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. And the voice *spake* unto him again the second time, What Elohim hath cleansed, *that* call not thou common. This was done thrice: 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. (Acts 10:9-17)

This passage has been interpreted by many Christians throughout the centuries as teaching that the Father had cleansed all animals for the purpose of human consumption. If we examine the passages in context however, we will find that Peter did NOT hold this same interpretation. As we shall see, his interpretation had nothing whatsoever to do with eating. Notice that in verse 17, it says that Peter, himself, did not accept the face-value meaning but "**doubted in himself what this vision...should mean.**"

Since Peter was struggling with the meaning of the vision, the clear implication is that the vision had some sort of a spiritual meaning that he could not readily discern. His discernment came, however, 11 verses later as he clarifies the real meaning of the vision:

And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing⁶ for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but Elohim hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean. (Acts 10:28)

The main point to notice is that Peter DID NOT say that the Creator had told him not to call any animal impure or unclean. The vision was talking about Gentiles and had nothing to do with animals or food.⁷ As alluded to in Acts 10:1-8, the Father had cleansed Cornelius and other Elohim-fearing Gentiles: "What Elohim hath cleansed, that call not thou common." (Acts 10:15). Peter was being told to go and preach to the reverent Gentiles whom the Father had cleansed, not to start eating pork and other unclean meats. Acts 10:34-35, 47 and Acts 11:1-18 further indicate that it was men that were made clean and not animals. Since Peter's vision had nothing to do with eating, we should not use it to try to teach something that it does not. After all, there are still the teachings of Paul, and maybe they will make the issue more clear.

⁶Although the Torah strictly forbade the people of Elohim from learning the pagan ways of the Gentiles, there is no specific commandment in Torah making it an "unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation." As a matter of fact, the Hebrews were to treat the stranger with respect (e.g. Exodus 22:21; 23:9). They were told to treat strangers "as a native among you...[and to] love him as yourself" (Leviticus 19:33-34). Peter was probably referring to Ohalot 18:7, which is part of the codified "Oral Torah" and declares the dwelling places of the Gentiles to be ritually unclean.

⁷It is no coincidence that Peter was told to "kill and eat" three times since Cornelius had sent three Gentile men (Acts 10:7) to summon Peter.

The Teachings of Paul.

The teachings of the Apostle Paul are truly a work of art. Many Bible teachers have described them as being "very deep," "quite complex," and even "hard to understand." And is this any wonder? Even Peter cautioned that the writings of Paul were to be considered very carefully.

And account *that* the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as *they do* also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. (2 Peter 3:15-16)

So just what was the "wisdom given" unto Paul? His own words say it best:

I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee (Acts 23:6).

For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of Elohim, and wasted it: And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. (Galatians 1:13-14)

As a Pharisee, Paul was very well versed in the "traditions" of Rabbinic Judaism--many of which go well beyond the commandments of the Torah that the Messiah had so zealously defended. It was these same "traditions" that had been the focus of Messiah's rebuke in Matthew 15 and Mark 7. Unless we realize this point, just like Peter warned, we will miss the true meaning of many of Paul's writings. While he was indeed the "Apostle to the Gentiles," he was constantly battling the influences of the so-called "Judaizers," who were continually trying to force these rabbinic "traditions" on the newly-converted Gentile Believers. Unlike most modern-day Christian scholars, however, the first century Gentiles who were turning to the Creator were a lot more familiar with these rabbinic "traditions" than are modern New Testament Believers.⁸ Consequently, the writings of Paul would be understood by them in a slightly different way than is commonly understood today, as we will soon see.

Before getting into Paul's teachings on clean and unclean foods, it will first be useful to find out how Paul viewed the Torah in general. This is especially true since he has been credited with teaching that the Torah no longer applies to Believers after the cross. While an in-depth discussion of his teachings on "the law" far exceeds the scope of this study, a cursory examination of a few appropriate Bible verses

⁸The reason for this familiarity is that the Gentile Believers of that day spent time in the synagogues. See Acts 13:16; 13:26; 13:42-48; 14:1; 17:4; 17:10-12; 17:17; and 18:4. From personal experience, only a few times in a synagogue will familiarize one with the "traditions" of Judaism--especially for an individual displaying a humble attitude and a genuine interest to learn about the subject.

may shed some light on Paul's proclamations about proper diet and may inspire a future general study of Paul's teachings on the Torah.

First of all, in Acts Paul says that he believes "everything that agrees with the Law [Torah] and that is written in the prophets." (Acts 24:12-14). He also made the statement that he had "done nothing wrong against the Law [Torah] of the Jews." (Acts 25:8). At first glance, it seems odd that Paul would have made such statements if he believed that the precepts of the Torah had been done away with at the cross of Calvary.

In Acts 21:20-26 Paul is asked to take purification rite to prove that there was no truth in the reports that he had taught men to forsake the writings of Moses (e.g. circumcision and other matters of the Torah--see verse 21). Since Paul took the vow (verse 24), either he was a hypocrite, or he had not actually taught that the Torah should be forsaken. If Paul was not a hypocrite, then he was not preaching against the Torah, and maybe we have misunderstood some of his teachings throughout the centuries. At any rate, his taking the vow suggests that we should closely scrutinize his teachings so that we do not inadvertently twist them as warned against in 2 Peter 3:15-16.

And finally, the writer of Acts speaks of the reactions of the Bereans to the preaching of Paul and Silas:

These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.
(Acts 17:11)

Notice that the teachings of Silas and Paul were being compared to the Scriptures to determine "whether those things were so." Remember also that the only Scriptures of that day were the writings of the Old Testament (the "Torah and the Prophets," according to Messiah in Matthew 5:17); the New Testament was not yet published and canonized. Paul's teachings were being compared to the Old Testament to determine whether his teachings were true.

The fact that the Bereans were "more noble" than the Thessalonians was determined solely on the basis that they compared Paul's teachings to the Old Testament. Since they accepted his teachings, Paul's teachings obviously were in agreement with the Torah and the rest of the Old Testament. As we now examine Paul's teachings on diet, let us now use the same standard as the Bereans so that we, too, will be accounted as noble in the eyes of our heavenly Father.

1 Timothy 4:1-4

Now the Spirit speaketh 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 meats*, which Elohim hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of Elohim *is good*, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: (1 Timothy 4:1-4)

At first, this Scripture verse seems to say that anything can go into our mouths as long as it is received with thanksgiving. This has indeed been the prevailing interpretation for the past 1500 years. The chief problem is that the church has been conditioned not to focus on the very next verse which says,

For it is sanctified by the word of Elohim and prayer.
(1 Timothy 4:5)

The word "For" is the Greek word "gar" (Strong's #1063), which is a descriptive "for" and means "because."⁹ What verses 3 and 4 are saying, therefore, is that

nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: **because** it is sanctified by the word of Elohim and prayer.

So the question of the modern day Berean--who tests all teachings by the Scripture--should be, "Where does the Word of the Almighty ever sanctify pork, or other unclean meats, as food?" The obvious answer is that "It NEVER does." The Word of our Creator teaches the exact OPPOSITE. For example,

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 carcass.
(Deuteronomy 14:8)

A people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face; that sacrificeth in gardens, and burneth incense upon altars of brick; Which remain among the graves, and lodge in the monuments, which eat swine's flesh, and broth of abominable things is in their vessels; (Isaiah 65:3-4)

What Paul is talking about when he says "For every creature of Elohim is good, and nothing to be refused," he is specifically speaking against those who would forbid the eating of Biblically clean foods sanctified by the Word of Elohim and prayer.

Notice also that the time period of Paul's predictions is "in the latter times." It had nothing to do with foods that were forbidden by the Torah, but is directed against those who would "in the latter times"

⁹ For example: "You don't have to do it today, for you can do it tomorrow."

forbid the eating of foods "sanctified by the Word of Elohim and prayer."¹⁰ We must not overlook the focus and context of Paul's teachings. Once again, they are directed against the "traditions" of man, not against the Torah dietary commandments of the Almighty!

Romans 14:14

I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Yahoshua, that *there is* nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him *it is* unclean.
(Romans 14:14)

Again, this statement by Paul seems to say that there is no such thing as unclean food, unless the individual deems it to be unclean for himself. But is this really what Paul is saying in light of his earlier proclamations? Once again, in order to find out the real meaning, we must read the verse fully in the context in which it is stated. The first clue as to the meaning of Paul's words comes 12 verses earlier.

For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs [vegetables]. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for Elohim hath received him. (Romans 14:2-3)

The next clue comes later in the same chapter.

But if thy brother be grieved with *thy* meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom [Messiah] died. Let not then your good be evil spoken of: For the kingdom of Elohim is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth [Messiah] *is* acceptable to Elohim, and approved of men. (Romans 14:15-18)

This second verse is the key which unlocks the meaning of the entire passage. Paul use of the term "thy brother" indicates that he is writing to Believers about their relations with other Believers. Obviously, both sets of Believers--those "who eat" and those "who do not eat"-- are "acceptable to Elohim" (Romans 14:18). The question is not, therefore, whether they are keeping the commandments of Elohim. If they are acceptable to Him, they are keeping His commandments.

He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. (1 John 2:4)

¹⁰While the author personally believes that Paul's teachings are focused against some type of "New Age" vegetarian movement in the future, he was raised in a denomination which forbade the eating of meats--even Biblically clean meats--on Friday night!

Here is the patience of the saints: here *are* they that keep the commandments of Elohim,
and the faith of Yahoshua. (Revelation 14:12)

The focus presented in Romans 14:15-18, as will soon be shown, centers exclusively around the question of Believers who only "eat vegetables" being "approved of men" (Romans 14:18).

The meaning of this verse, which would have been clear to Gentiles in Paul's day because of their familiarity with Pharisaic traditions (see footnote 8), became clear to the author one day while he was talking to a Jewish man. This man eats only Biblically clean meats and even abides by the rabbinic mandates of having separate dishes for meat and dairy products. The meat he purchases is killed and butchered by a kosher-certified butcher. The only problem is that he feels uncomfortable inviting a certain Rabbi that he likes to his home to eat. Although the Rabbi has had the man into his home several times, if the Rabbi comes to the home of the man, the Rabbi will "eat only vegetables," (quoting the saddened man)--*the same words used by Paul in Romans 14:2-3!*

The question in this situation is not that one man is eating Biblically clean meats and one is not; they both eat Biblically clean meats in their homes. The question is one of degrees of rabbinic "kosher" or cleanliness. The Rabbi only eats meat which comes from a certain group of butchers in New York. These butchers have been specially certified by the Rabbi's particular sect of Judaism and are the only ones which are "approved." Their meat "approved of men" (Romans 14:18) is believed to be somehow more ritually clean than the Biblically-clean meat which the other man buys from kosher butchers locally. The local meat is no less Biblically proper, but does not have the additional "approval of men."¹¹

Paul's exhortation in the Book of Romans has nothing to do with permitting Believers to eat meat forbidden by the Word of the Almighty. He is simply urging Believers to be sensitive to the dietary beliefs of other Believers who had been raised in the Pharisaic traditions and would eat only meat which had been rabbinically certified by their own sect. Paul is not teaching people to forsake the directives of the Word of the Almighty. While he was personally "persuaded by the Lord Yahoshua" that failure to perform certain rituals did not make anything ritually "unclean of itself,"¹² he is urging sensitivity to those who do believe that such an animal should not be eaten: "but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him *it is* unclean." (Romans 14:14).

¹¹"Kosher" meat has to be slaughtered in a very particular manner known as "shechita," or Jewish ritual slaughter. This manner of slaughter, painstakingly handed down by tradition is described at Appendix 2.

¹²Remember the teachings of Yahoshua, dealt with earlier, concerning Pharisaic purification rituals in Matthew 15:1-13 and in Mark 7:1-16.

1 Corinthians 10:25

To the congregation in Corinth, Paul made another of his statements which, if not read in context, makes it seem as if the dietary commandments of our Creator have been done away with.

Whatsoever is sold in the shambles [meat market], *that* eat, asking no question for conscience sake: (1 Corinthians 10:25)

The author has been to numerous countries and it is really surprising to see the types of creatures sold for human consumption in the various markets. Is Paul really saying that the Creator's people should start eating centipedes, snakes, dogs, cats and rodents as long as they are sold in meat markets? While such an interpretation is possible, maybe Paul's statement should first be read in context.

The context of Paul's statement is very clearly enunciated 6 verses earlier (1 Corinthians 10:19). The question being discussed is whether or not Believers could eat meat which had been previously sacrificed to idols by someone else and subsequently ended up in the meat market. There is absolutely no reason to construe Paul's statements outside those parameters. Even in 1 Corinthians 10:27 when he Paul says to "eat anything that is set before you," notice that he is NOT talking about unclean meats. He clarifies the context of his statement in the very next verse:

But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that showed it, and for conscience sake: for the earth *is* the Lord's, and the fullness thereof. (1 Corinthians 10:28)

The example he uses makes it perfectly clear that he is talking strictly about the consumption of meats offered to idols.¹³ While this would have been the perfect opportunity for Paul to proclaim that eating swine, rat, lobster, or any other unclean animal were permissible--if that had been his intention--he did not do so. And since Paul did not use these statements to teach against the dietary commandments of Elohim, we should probably not take his statements out of context and use them for purposes not originally intended.

Galatians 2:11-16

But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, **he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them**

¹³The Torah does not specifically forbid the consumption of biblically clean meat which ended up in a meat market after someone else had previously sacrificed it to an idol. Notice that Paul does NOT address the act of offering such meat to an idol--a practice which IS forbidden by the Torah!

which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.

But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before *them* all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? We *who are* Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Yahoshua [Messiah], even we have believed in Yahoshua [Messiah], that we might be justified by the faith of [Messiah], and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. (Galatians 2:11-16)

This passage has likewise been used to try to justify the eating of meats forbidden in the Old Testament.

To use the passage in this way, however, one must assume that the Gentiles spoken of are themselves eating swine, shellfish, catfish, or some other unclean creature. The Bible, however, says no such thing.¹⁴ Paul's rebuke dealt simply with the fact that Peter was disassociating himself with Gentiles in the presence of the visitors from Jerusalem. The question is not one of eating unclean meats. It has to do with the Oral Torah tradition of avoiding the company of Gentiles. Peter was simply trying to elicit the approval of the visitors from Jerusalem and put this goal above the love that he should have displayed to his Gentile brethren. Paul rebuked him for slipping back under the "tradition of men," not for failing to eat Biblically unclean meats. To interpret the passage otherwise is to twist it in a way warned against in 2 Peter 3:15-16!

Colossians 2:16-17

Paul's letter to the Colossians contains two of the chief verses used to teach that the Father's dietary commandments and other so-called "ceremonial laws" of the Torah of Elohim were done away with at the cross.

Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath *days*: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body *is* of [Messiah]. (Colossians 2:16-17)

Once again, when read in isolation this verse seems to say that foods, drinks, and worship days are purely matters of personal preference since the cross. After all, these things "were only a shadow of things to come," weren't they?

¹⁴These Gentiles were believers who had "turned to Elohim" (Acts 15:19) from the sins of paganism. Since they were obviously trying to conform their lives to the Scriptures, it is reasonable to assume that they were now regularly eating Biblically clean foods--especially since Peter and Paul had been eating with them.

The teaching that the "holydays, new moons, and sabbaths were only a shadow of things to come" is the first clue to the problem. The Bible does NOT say that these things "were a shadow of things to come." Paul specifically stated that they "ARE a shadow of things to come." But what did he mean?

What the Bible actually teaches about the holydays, new moons, and sabbaths is a very interesting study, but well beyond the focus of Biblical dietary questions. Suffice it to say, however, that all of Paul's statements must be examined in the context in which they were written. If we look to the beginning of Colossians 2, we see the climate in which Paul's statements were made. In verse 4, Paul says that he is making his statements so that no one may delude the Believers at Colosse "with persuasive argument." In verse 8, he begins to focus on just what these persuasive arguments might consist of:

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after [Messiah]. (Colossians 2:8)

Once again, we see the teachers of "the tradition of men" as the focus of Paul's concern. After all, who but the Pharisees would seek to judge his readers "in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath *days*?" (Colossians 2:16).¹⁵ It couldn't have been the pagan rulers of the time; they did not even observe these things! It was the Pharisaic "rulers and authorities" (verse 15), and their codified "Oral Torah" to whom Paul was referring when he said,

Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; *And* having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.
(Colossians 2:14-15)

Almost any of the modern study Bibles will point out that the word "handwriting" in the preceding passage refers to a legal document of some type. *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* defines it as

5498. *ceirografon* **cheirographon**, *khi-rog'-raf-on*; neut of a comp. of 5495 and 1125; something *hand-written* ("*chirograph*"), i.e. a *manuscript* (spec. a legal *document* or *bond* [fig.]):-handwriting.

¹⁵The same situation can be seen even today. While most Rabbis do not concern themselves with the worship practices of Believers, the situation changes when Believers begin to observe Torah commandments traditionally viewed as "Jewish." From personal experience, many Rabbis will try to discourage Gentile observance. Failing that, they will try to persuade the Gentiles that their efforts are in vain unless the observances are done in accordance with the Rabbinic tradition. In Paul's day, where Believers were often in the synagogues (see Acts 13:16; 13:26; 13:42-48; 14:1; 17:4; 17:10-12; 17:17; and 18:4), interaction with Rabbis was undoubtedly more common than it is today.

Similarly, the word "ordinances" is defined by *Strong's Concordance* as

1378. dogma **dogma**, *dog'-mah*; from the base of 1380; a *law* (civil, cer., or eccl.):--decree, ordinance.

The pharisaic codification of the "Oral Torah" is just such a document of the type to which Paul is referring. It is literally a voluminous legal document consisting of religious "dogma" that was painstakingly recorded by the scribes.¹⁶ It was these burdensome legal regulations which enumerated the myriad of requirements that were to be performed by "observant" Jews concerning "meat,...drink,...respect of an holyday,...the new moon,...the sabbath days," and virtually every other aspect of daily life.

If we look carefully at Paul's words we will find that he is NOT advocating that the observance of holydays, new moons, sabbath days, and the dietary commandments of the Almighty should be done away with. He is simply saying that Believers are not to concern themselves with the legalistic requirements of the Pharisees concerning how to keep these observances!

Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath *days*: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body *is* of [Messiah]. (Colossians 2:16-17)

Notice that Paul did NOT say that his readers would not be judged in these matters; he simply said that no man was to be their judge. Just as in other questions of obedience and worship, the sole judge of how a Believer is to observe these commandments is the Almighty--not the scribes and Pharisees who had put themselves into "Moses' seat" (Matthew 23:2) as the religious rulers of the people. Paul goes on to point out that it was the scribes and Pharisees to whom he was referring.

And having spoiled principalities (arch **arche**.) and powers (ἐκουσία **exousia**), he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. (Colossians 2:15)

The words "principalities" and "powers" are defined by *Strong's Concordance* as follows:

746. arch **arche**, *ar-khay'*; from 756; (prop. abstr.) a *commencement*, or (concr.) *chief* (in various applications of order, time, place or rank):--beginning, corner, (at the, the) first (estate), magistrate, power, principal-ity, principle, rule.

1849. ἐκουσία **exousia**, *ex-oo-see'-ah*; from 1832 (in the sense of ability); *privilege*, i.e. (subj.) *force*, *capacity*, *competency*, *freedom*, or (obj.) *mastery* (concr.)

¹⁶Its completed form is referred to as the Talmud and it is so voluminous that it resembles the Encyclopædia Britannica in size and scope!

magistrate, superhuman, potentate, token of control) delegated influence:-- authority, jurisdiction, liberty, power, right, strength.

Many Believers have been taught that "principalities" and "powers" refer only to spiritual minions of Satan. They refer to the book of Ephesians where we find,

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities (*αρχ* **arche**), against powers (*εξουσία* **exousia**), against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*. (Ephesians 6:12)

But if we look a little closer, we will find that this passage is not talking about the spiritual minions of Satan. It is talking about those human beings through whom the spiritual minions of Satan were operating a spiritually corrupt religious system. Many of the Scribes and Pharisees were in fact operating this corrupt religious system which ignored the commandments of the Almighty and substituted their own "traditions of men." This system was in fact so corrupt that it went so far as to kill those Believers who refused to submit to it. Messiah's own words explain this to us:

Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. (John 8:44)

It was to these same religious leaders to whom Messiah Yahoshua had referred in the book of Luke:

And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and *unto* magistrates (*αρχ* **arche**), and powers (*εξουσία* **exousia**), take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: for the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say. (Luke 12:11-12)

In Colossians 2:14-17, Paul is simply telling Believers not to submit themselves to the human agents of spiritual wickedness when it came to matters of worship. The scribes and Pharisees had attacked Yahoshua's every Messianic action because He had threatened their authoritarian religious strangle-hold over the people. Messiah had denounced their religious doctrines as un-Biblical "commandments of men" which were contrary to the Torah and obviously not of Elohim, but of the devil. Paul was simply presenting the same message to the Believers in Colosse and telling them that Yahoshua, by allowing Himself to be killed, had not only triumphed over the devil, but over the devil's minions on the earth--the wicked scribes and Pharisees. Concerning these, He "made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it." (Colossians 2:15).

Rather than teaching against the commandments of the Torah of the Creator, Paul's statements in Colossians 2:14-16 again are directed against the scribes and Pharisees--the ones who placed their own religious traditions above the commandments of Elohim. Concerning the commandments relating to "meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath *days*," Paul taught only that man was not to be their judge.

Paul further confirms that his statements are directed against the scribes and Pharisees as we read beyond verse 16.I

Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ. Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the **commandments and doctrines of men**? Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.
(Colossians 2:16-23)

As alluded to earlier, the "commandments" of men referred to in verse 22 is the Greek word

1778. entalma **entalma**, *en'-tal-mah*; from 1781; an *injunction*, *i.e.* religious precept; commandment.

This is the same Greek translation used to describe the "commandments of men" referred to by Messiah Yahoshua in Matthew 15:9. Notice that this word, **en-TAL-ma**, contains the same root as used in the word **TAL-mud**, the complete codification of these "commandments of men." In contrast, the Greek translation used to describe the Torah "commandments" of Elohim referred to by Messiah Yahoshua in Matthew 19:17 is the Greek word

1785. entola, **entole**, *en-tol-ay*'; from 1781; *injunction*, *i.e.* an authoritative prescription;--commandment, precept.

We find, therefore, that Paul's letter to the Colossians is teaching against the **en-TAL-ma** "commandments of men" and not against the **entole** "commandments of Elohim." Again, we would do

well to look to Peter's (2 Peter 3:15-16) warning before we try to use Paul's statements to teach against the dietary--or any other--commandments of the Almighty.¹⁷

Acts 15.

Another key passage used to teach that the Father's dietary commandments do not apply to New Testament Gentile Believers is found in Acts 15:19-21. James is considering the Gentiles who are turning to the Creator. These Gentile Believers are not mature Christians, but are new Christians coming out of paganism and therefore spiritual babes. That is why James says that they should not make it difficult for those turning to Elohim. Instead of putting an unbearable burden upon these new Believers, four "bare minimum" requirements are placed upon them to bring them out of the pagan form of worship.¹⁸

Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to Elohim: But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood. For [Greek "gar" means "because"] Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day. (Acts 15:19-21)

Many commentaries explain these four directives as being given to Gentiles so that they do not offend the sensitivities of the Jews. This idea, while possible, makes far less sense when examined in context of the passage.

First, the focus of the discussion is not Jewish Believers, but rather Gentile Believers who are only turning to the Almighty and therefore spiritual babes. That is why James stresses the need not to make this transition difficult for them. If the focus was the sensitivities of Jewish Believers, then the sentence should have begun by reflecting those difficulties rather than those of the Gentile Believers. The Jewish Believers, who grew up in the Torah, would have no transition to worry about.

Second, the use of the descriptive "for" ["gar" in Greek--meaning "because"] directly links the phrase "Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day" as the rationale for only imposing the four abstinence directives. To say that the Jewish Believers would hear the law of Moses preached every Sabbath is a waste of Divinely-inspired words! Of

¹⁷Incidentally, the term "ceremonial laws" is not found in the Bible. It, like the teachings of the Pharisees, is a creation of man and should probably be stricken from our vocabulary when referring to the commandments of the Almighty.

¹⁸These four prohibitions just happened to be the pagan worship practices of (1) having pre-sacrificial sexual relations with temple prostitutes; (2) strangling the sacrificial animals, (3) drinking the blood of the animals, and (4) offering the animals to an idol. These four prohibitions were obviously not meant to be an inclusive list for Gentile conduct. They do NOT forbid, for example, the acts of murder, stealing, lying, etc. (The Torah, however, does forbid them!)

course the Jewish Believers would get the Torah--the emphasis here is that the Gentiles would hear it preached.

This is the same practice used in churches today. Once an unsaved soul accepts the Messiah as his personal Savior, is he expected to give up all his sinful ways right on the spot? Or is he rather invited into fellowship, given a few absolutes, and then lovingly taught the finer ways of a Believer's life as he continues to hear the Word preached every week? Nothing has changed here. The Gentiles who were turning to the Almighty were turning away from idol-worshiping paganism. The four restrictions given by James to the Gentiles, in addition to being offensive to Jews, were offensive to all Believers because they had to do with pagan worship.

The understanding here is that the Gentile Believers would hear the Torah being preached every Sabbath when they went to the synagogue to worship and would gradually come to learn it and internalize it. In this way, rather than the Torah commandments of the Father being a burden, they would come to want to follow them. That, after all, is what the New Covenant is all about. Paul describes it as follows:

This *is* the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them.
(Hebrews 10:16)

Paul is referring back to Hebrews 8:10, which is a direct quote from Jeremiah 31:33. In Jeremiah, the word "laws" is "Torah." In other words, the New Covenant is NOT to do away with the Torah commandments of the Almighty but to have them put into the hearts and minds of the New Testament Believer!

Mark 5 and Luke 8

Before we leave the New Testament we should examine a curious event which indicates that, even in New Testament times, there was a very real spiritual aspect to clean and unclean animals. In both Mark chapter 5, and in Luke chapter 8, the setting was the other side of the Sea of Galilee in the land of the Gerasenes. A crazed man, possessed by a legion of demons, approached the Messiah and the demons begged the Messiah not to torment them. Just as the Messiah was about to cast them out, the demons made a very strange request. They begged Him to send them into a herd of swine which just happened to be in the area.

Reflect for a moment. Since the Messiah said that He was sent to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 15:24), why did He travel to the other side of the Sea of Galilee to the land of the non-Jewish Gerasenes, a people who raised pigs? Since everything that Messiah did was some type of object

lesson for us, what was His purpose here? After all, he had cast out demons in the Jewish areas and there were numerous flocks of animals there. Those animals, however, would have been Biblically clean animals such as sheep or goats. And He did NOT use these clean animals as creatures that he would allow the demons to go into. Maybe this more unlikely scenario of a herd of swine was used to show us that there is some type of connection between unclean animals and demons that we cannot perceive with our five senses. After all, the demons begged to go into the swine!

THE CRUX OF THE MATTER

The dietary commandments of the Almighty were meticulously laid out for His people in great detail. Although we may not understand the reasons for these commandments, He tells us through the prophet:

For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:9)

Much of what goes on in the spirit realm we are neither able to perceive nor understand. Both the Creator's Torah and the writings of His prophets seem to indicate that there is a very real spiritual aspect to the consumption of unclean animals that we cannot perceive with our five senses. After all, His Word tells us that violation of these dietary commandments somehow defiles us (Leviticus 11:44; 20:25) and causes Him, the Creator, to be profaned (Ezekiel 22:26). It even goes so far as to suggest that on the day of judgment, the same standards apply; all those failing to abide by these standards will be consumed (Isaiah 66:15-17). And this only makes sense since the Almighty tells us through the prophet:

For I *am* Yahowah, I change not.
(Malachi 3:6)

As we move into the New Testament teachings, we find that our Father's dietary commandments were never done away with, either at the cross or any place else. While virtually every aspect of the Messiah's life was heralded by Old Testament prophecies, there is absolutely NO prophecy which states that He would annul the distinction between clean and unclean foods or any other of the Father's commandments. The Messiah, Himself, stated quite the opposite when He declared:

Think not that I am come to destroy the Torah, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one ittle shall in no wise pass from the Torah, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same

shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.
(Matthew 5:17-20)

Since heaven and earth have not yet passed away, neither have "one jot or one title" passed from the Torah, according to Messiah. He went on two chapters later to make His zeal for the Father's commandments even more manifest.

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. (Matthew 7:21)

While it could be argued that the Messiah's will is stated fully in the New Testament, the will of the Father is given in the commandments of His Torah (Genesis 26:5). And since Messiah declares that the Torah is still in effect (Matthew 5:17-18), so are the Father's dietary laws.¹⁹

As we have seen, the words of our Messiah, the vision of Peter, and the words of Paul have all been stretched and twisted beyond their plain contextual meanings in order to try to make them say something they do not. Is it any wonder that expositors struggle with seeming contradictions in the Scriptures? Some even have to argue that the contradictions are there only because "Yahoshua was teaching before the cross; Paul was teaching after." Does that mean that we cannot depend upon Messiah's end-time prophecies because he did not have the "more full revelation which came only after the cross?" And how should we view the end-time prophecies of Daniel, Ezekiel, and the other Prophets? One can easily see the absurdity of such arguments.

While a detailed discussion is beyond the scope of this study, the teachings that try to annul the dietary commandments and other directives of the Almighty had their origins in the pagan worship practices which crept into the church during the first few centuries after the death of Messiah. (Both our Messiah and Paul warned that this would happen). That is why the Word of the Almighty must often be stretched and twisted to make it fit into the mold of many of the "traditional" Christian practices. Does it make sense that we have been "freed from the law" only to observe pagan practices? Have you ever wondered, for example, why all the Christian "holy days" have their origins in paganism when the real Christian holy days are--and have always been--in the pages of Scripture?²⁰ Similar to the truth of the Creator's dietary laws, they have been hidden from our eyes by the "traditions of man" which were corrupted by pagan practices.

¹⁹The commandments concerning circumcision apply to a special covenant relationship which will be discussed in another part of the larger study.

²⁰This will be shown in another study entitled, "Holy Days or Holidays? -- The Search for the True Christian Feast Days."

Very few Believers would want to "be called the least in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:19) over an Easter ham or similar unclean foods. The real tragedy, however, is that we have never been taught the real Biblical truth--again thanks to pagan influences accepted as church tradition. The very practice of consuming pork and other unclean animals had its origins not among the people of the Almighty, but among the heathens which surrounded the nation of Israel. The people of Elohim were told:

Thus saith Yahowah, Learn not the way of the heathen. (Jeremiah 10:2)

In addition to the passages forbidding unclean meats cited earlier in the study, the reader would do well to take a look at the Apocryphal Books Maccabees. (Maccabees was included in the original 1611 KJV Bible: see Appendix 1). I Maccabees 1:44-64 lays out in detail some of the abominable practices forced upon the Almighty's people by the pagan, Antiochus Epiphanes. One of his chief abominations was to force the people to make offerings of unclean animals--especially the swine.

Since our Father told us numerous times not to defile ourselves by eating unclean animals, something that Paul said may take on a new meaning.

Know ye not that ye are the temple of Elohim, and *that* the Spirit of Elohim dwelleth in you? **If any man defile the temple of Elohim**, him shall Elohim destroy; for the temple of Elohim is holy, which *temple* ye are. (1 Corinthians 3:16-17)

Since we are called to be holy, should we take into our bodies things proclaimed by the Word of our Father to be abominable?

Some would argue that keeping the Almighty's dietary commandments may not rise to the level of the "weightier matters" of Christian love, mercy, and fellowship. But even if we assume that the dietary commandments only rise to the same level as tithing "a tenth of one's mint and spices," we might be surprised to see how our Savior feels about such seemingly-unimportant details.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and have omitted the weightier *matters* of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. (Matthew 23:23)

But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of Elohim: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. (Luke 11:42)

According to the Messiah, while some commandments of the Torah²¹ may be more important than others, they are all important. While concentrating on "weightier *matters* of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith" as Believers, we are "not to leave the others undone."

This obedience to the whole Word of the Father--as taught by Messiah--is an important part of the New covenant, according to Paul.

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant... For this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws [Torah] into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them an Elohim, and they shall be to me a people:
(Hebrews 8:8-10)

When we recognize that the One who came "in the likeness of sinful flesh" to condemn sin in the flesh, is the Author of the Torah then it makes perfect sense to want to obey every commandment that He gives us in it--especially since the Bible defines sin for us as transgression of the Torah.

Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law [Torah]: for sin is the transgression of the Torah. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous. (1 John 3:4-7)

The fervent desire of a Believer to sin no more is the "heart circumcision" spoken of in Romans 2:29.

But he *is* a Jew²², which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, *and* not in the letter; whose praise *is* not of men, but of Elohim. (Romans 2:29)

Keeping the commandments of the Torah in this manner is not the "legalism" preached against by Paul. The "heart circumcision" will cause a person to obey our Father's Torah out of love for Messiah and His ultimate sacrifice so that we could be saved. We will not keep the commandments in order to hold our own righteousness over the head of someone else in a legalistic manner, as was done by certain of the Scribes, Pharisees, and even certain of the early Believers. On the contrary, we will keep the commandments solely out of a sincere love for the Father and His Messiah, to please them and to give them glory. As Yahoshua said,

²¹The commandments of "law, judgment, mercy, and faith" (Matthew 23:23) preached in the New Testament were first given in the Torah.

²²The term "Jew" (Hebrew: Yahudi) means "one who lifts his hands in worship to Yah." "Yah," the shortened form of "Yahowah" is the Name of the Almighty (See, for example, Psalm 68:4).

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good [works], and [glorify] your Father which is in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

Even Paul, the man miscredited with throwing out the Torah, tells us:

But we know that the Torah *is* good, if a man use it lawfully; (1 Timothy 1:8)

This lawful use of Torah was found among early Believers as an indicator that they are true children of the Father and lovers of each other.

Whosoever believeth that Yahoshua is the Messiah is born of Elohim: and every one that loveth Him that begat loveth Him also that is begotten of Him. By this we know that we love the children of Elohim, when we love Elohim, and keep His commandments. For this is the love of Elohim, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous. (1 John 5:2-3)

In the final analysis, a circumcised "heart of flesh" which desires to obey Him in all things is the end result of being born again. This heart circumcision produces true repentance which allows us to yield our hearts to His Holy Spirit. Although we will still fall short, once we become convicted that something is sin we will repent and endeavor to "sin no more" (John 5:14, 8:11).

In truth, the consumption of unclean foods is sin because it is "transgression of the Torah" (1 John 3:4). This statement is not made in a judgmental tone. It is simply what the Bible says on the issue. It is the hope of the author that this study will serve as a voice urging us to get back to one of the true Biblical practices of first-century faith--a Biblically clean diet. We have seen this teaching to be in total harmony with the rest of Scripture.

The contrary teaching, which permits and encourages consumption of Biblically unclean foods has been shown to contradict numerous passages of Scripture--to include many from the New Testament passages. We have seen that only by taking certain New Testament verses out of their natural context can this contrary teaching be weakly supported. But who is the author of such a teaching?

The father of this twisted doctrine is the father of all other twisted teachings and doctrines. Who but the "liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44) misquotes and takes Scripture out of context to cause sincere Believers to go astray? After all, did not Satan misquote and twist Scripture to Eve and even to our Messiah, Himself? Is it any wonder that Satan was able to do the same thing in the early church when other pagan doctrines (such as bowing down to, and burning incense to statues) were slipping in?

The only way that Satan could get sincere Believers to observe practices contrary to the Word of the Almighty was to come into the very body of Messiah as "wolves in sheep's clothing" (Matthew 7:15),

teaching false doctrines. This was began in the infancy of the church right after the death of Paul (Acts 20:29). Only by Satan planting his false teachers in the church would sincere believers over the centuries be persuaded to observe un-Biblical practices such as the consumption of Biblically unclean foods.

The author urges every Believer to study this issue. More importantly, he urges every Believer to pray to the Almighty Creator of the Universe -- "the Elohim of Abraham, the Elohim of Isaac, and the Elohim of Jacob" (Exodus 3:6), and to ask Him His will in the matter: "Father, teach us to love what You love and to hate what You hate." The author would lastly further urge that, should He put it on your heart to follow His dietary commandments, be careful to act as the judge of no other man or woman in this matter. Share the will of the Almighty with them in humility, and above all in love. May the Almighty bless you in the name of our Savior!

**THE
HOLY
BIBLE
1611 Edition**

King James Version

A word-for-word reprint of the
First Edition of the Authorized Version
presented in roman letters
for easy reading and
comparison with subsequent editions



THOMAS NELSON PUBLISHERS
Nashville

Apocrypha.	Chap.j.	Apocrypha.
 <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold;">¶ The first booke of the Maccabees.</p>		
<p style="font-weight: bold; letter-spacing: 0.5em;">C H A P. I.</p>		
<p>14 Antiochus gave leave to set vp the fashions of the Gentiles in Hierusalem, 22 And spoiled it, & the temple in it, 37 And set vp therein the abomination of desolation, 63 And slew those that did circumsise their children.</p>	<p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; text-align: center;">A</p> <p>Nd it happened, after that Alexander sonne of Philip, the Macedonian, who came out of the land of Chettim, had smitten Darius king of the Persians and Medes, that hee reigned in his stead, the first ouer Greere,</p> <p>2 And made many wars, and wan many strong holds, and slew the kings of the earth,</p> <p>3 And went through to the ends of the earth, and tooke spoiles of many nations, insomuch, that the earth was quiet before him, whereupon he was exalted, and his heart was lifted vp.</p> <p>4 And he gathered a mighty strong hoste, and raled ouer countries, and nations and kings, who became tributaries vnto him.</p> <p>5 And after these things he fell sicke, and perceiued † that he should die.</p> <p>6 Wherefore he called his seruants, such as were honourable, and had bin brought vp with him from his youth, and parted his kingdome among them, while he was yet alieue:</p> <p>7 So Alexander reigned twelue yeeres, and (then) died.</p> <p>8 And his seruants haue rule euery one in his place.</p> <p>9 And after his death they all put crownes [vpon themselves] so did their sonnes after them, many yeeres, and e- uils were multiplied in the earth.</p> <p>10 And there came out of them a wicked roote, Antiochus [surnamed] Epiphantes, sonne of Antiochus the king, who had bene an hostage at Rome, and he reigned in the hundreth and thir-</p>	<p>ty and seuenth yeere of the kingdome of the Greekes.</p> <p>11 In those daies went there out of Israel wicked men, who perswaded many, saying, Let vs goe, and make a couenant with the heathen, that are round about vs: for since we departed from them, † we haue had much sorrow.</p> <p>12 So this deuise pleased them well.</p> <p>13 Then certaine of the people were so forward heerein, that they went to the king, who gaue them licence to doe after the ordinances of the heathen.</p> <p>14 Whereupon they built a place of exercise at Ierusalem, according to the customes of the heathen,</p> <p>15 And made themselves, vncircumcised, and forsooke the holy couenant, and ioyned themselues to the heathen, and were sold to doe mischief.</p> <p>16 Now when the kingdome was established, before Antiochus, hee thought to reigne ouer Egypt, that he might haue † dominion of two realms:</p> <p>17 Wherefore he entred into Egypt with a great multitude, with chariots, and elephants, and horsemen, and a great nauie,</p> <p>18 And made warre against Ptolomee king of Egypt, but Ptolomee was affraide of him, and fled: and many were wounded to death.</p> <p>19 Thus they got the strong cities in the land of Egypt, and hee tooke the spoiles thereof.</p> <p>20 And after that Antiochus had smitten Egypt, he returned againe in the hundreth fortie and third yeere, and went vp against Israel and Ierusalem with a great multitude,</p> <p>21 And entred proudly into the sanctuary, and tooke away the golden altar, and the candlestick of light, and all the vessels thereof.</p> <p>22 And the table of the shewbread, and the powring vessels, and the vials, and the censers of gold, & the vaile, and the crownes, & the golden ornaments that were before the temple, all which he pulled off.</p>
<p><small>10v, Chr. 309v.</small></p> <p><small>10v, 11r heref year eruled and 309d vp.</small></p> <p><small>10v, 11v. dones which become 4c.</small></p> <p><small>10v. that is dark.</small></p>	<p><small>7 Gre. many their haue found vs.</small></p> <p><small>10v. are vp an open school at Je- rusalem.</small></p> <p><small>8 Or, he pul- led out things.</small></p>	<p style="text-align: right;">23 He</p>

Appendix 1: THE BOOK OF MACCABEES IN THE ORIGINAL 1611 KJV BIBLE

I Maccabees 1:44-64

44 For the king [Antiochus Epiphanes] had sent letters by messengers unto Jerusalem, and the cities of Judah, that they should follow the strange laws of the land,

45 And forbid burnt offerings, and sacrifice, and drink offerings in the temple; and that they should profane the Sabbaths and the festival days:

46 And pollute the sanctuary and the holy people:

47 Set up altars, and groves, and chapels of idols, and sacrifice swines' flesh, and unclean beasts:

48 That they should also leave their children uncircumcised, and make their souls abominable with all manner of uncleanness, and profanation:

49 To the end they might forget the Law, and change all the ordinances.

50 And whosoever would not do according to the commandment of the king [he said] he should die.

51 In the selfsame manner wrote he to his whole kingdom, and appointed overseers over all the people, commanding the cities of Judah to sacrifice, city by city.

52 Then many of the people were gathered unto them, to wit, every one that forsook the Law, and so they committed evils in the land:

53 And drove the Israelites into secret places, even wheresoever they could fly for succor.

54 Now the fifteenth day of the month Kislev, in the hundred forty-fifth year, they set up the abomination of desolation upon the Altar, and built idol altars throughout the cities of Judah, on every side:

55 And burnt incense at the doors of their houses, and in the streets.

56 And when they had rent in pieces the books of the Law which they found, they burnt them with fire.

57 And wheresoever was found with any, the book of the Testament, or if any consented to the Law, the king's commandment was that they should put him to death.

58 Thus they did by their authority, unto the Israelites every month, to as many as were found in the cities.

59 Now the twenty-fifth day of the month, they did sacrifice upon the idol altar, which was upon the Altar of Elohim.

60 At which time they put to death certain women that had caused their children to be circumcised.

61 And they hanged the infants about their necks, and rifled their houses, and slew them that had circumcised them.

62 Howbeit, many in Israel were fully resolved and confirmed in themselves, not to eat any unclean thing.

63 Wherefore they chose rather to die, that they might not be defiled with meats, and that they might not profane the holy Covenant: So then they died.

64 And there was very great wrath upon Israel.

Appendix 2: RABBINIC RITUAL SLAUGHTER--"SHECHITA"

The Rabbinic ritual slaughter is a very involved process. Truly "observant" Jews will not eat meats -- even Biblically clean meats -- unless they are slaughtered in this manner. This process was codified by the Pharisees and is carefully passed down to this day. The process is explained by a Rabbi Eidlitz as follows:

Ritual slaughter of animals differs in many ways from common techniques of slaughter. In ritual slaughter, we find caution and detail in every act. In this rabbinically supervised slaughter, the animal is killed with a knife. In this act we emphasize the Jewish respect for dignity of life. Great care is taken to use a knife that has been properly sharpened. The blade must be flawless, without a nick, and perfectly smooth, thus assuring that the kill will be quick, clean and painless to the animal.

This entire process begins with the *shochet* (ritual slaughterer) inspecting the knife for possible flaws and nicks. He does this by running the edge of a fingernail up and down the blade. The slightest nick means that the knife must be resharpened. After this, he recites a short Bracha [blessing] before beginning the actual *Shechita*.

This knife (*chalaf*) is usually about 6 inches long for chickens and 18 in long for larger animals. the knife has no point at the end of it, and is of equal width from top to bottom. These precautions are necessary in order to guarantee that the neck of the animal will not be torn. The shochet must cut through the trachea and esophagus to the jugular vein very quickly and in a clean fashion. He must not kill the animal by stabbing it.

The animal's neck is first washed thoroughly to remove any sand particles in the fur which could cause a nick in the knife during slaughter. The shochet's hand must be very steady, and he must employ one continuous movement, carefully avoiding the spine. This cut only takes a few seconds and is a much more humane method of killing an animal than are such common practices as smashing the head, shooting the animal or scalding it while it is still alive.

Following the slaughter, the carcass is hung upside down so that the blood can drain properly. The shochet checks for adhesions on the lungs, which would indicate an abscess. If one is found, the animal is rejected as unkosher. Only about 30 percent of slaughtered animals can be used for kosher distribution.

At this point the *traibering* process is begun. The major blood vessels, nerves and forbidden fats will be removed. The carcass is then divided into primal cuts. The next step is soaking the meat in water for 30 minutes. It is then salted for 1 hour, and then washed another 3 times.

SOURCE: Rabbi E. Eidlitz, Is It Kosher?, (Israel: Feldheim Publishers, 1993), pp. 64-65.

Appendix 3: PRACTICAL GUIDE TO FOLLOWING BIBLICAL DIETARY LAWS

GENERAL

Let's assume that the Creator's biblical laws of clean and unclean foods do apply to His people today and one is convicted to follow them. How does one go about it? Will simply giving up pork, shellfish, catfish, and other unclean animals do the trick? Unfortunately, it is not quite that easy. As with the other aspects of a Believer's life, the standards and practices of "the World" make it much more difficult than it would otherwise be. But, as with all aspects of a Believer's walk, keeping the Father's dietary commandments is not impossible and actually becomes a joy as one becomes more accustomed to it. Now a little in the way of background.

Fifty years ago, most of what a person ate was grown or processed by the family which would be eating it. If a person wanted to observe the dietary commandments that the Father gave to His people, it was a fairly simple thing to do--a cow was clean and a pig was unclean. Today, however, things are not quite so simple because approximately 80-90 percent of the food we eat is processed before it comes into our homes. This processing is where the real problems start.

If the World had been following the Almighty's dietary commandments all along, food processing would still not present a problem because the food processors would never use unclean ingredients to start with. Unfortunately however, most of the World neither knows nor cares about the dietary commandments of our Creator. As a result, numerous unclean animals and animal by-products have flooded the consumer food market. And with the myriad of ingredients and additives, it is almost impossible to know what you are actually eating. Even the more demanding labeling requirements do not always help. For example,

Some ingredients with innocuous sounding names need special attention. "Natural colors" have been known to be derived from insects, "softeners" from whale oil, and "artificial flavors" from cats.²³

As hopeless as the situation may seem, the Almighty has made a way for us to be able to follow His dietary commandments. We will get into that a little later. First, however, we discuss some of the problem ingredients which confront the would-be follower of the Father's dietary commandments.

PROBLEMATIC INGREDIENTS

²³Rabbi E. Eidlitz, Is It Kosher?, (Israel: Feldheim Publishers, 1993), p. 10.

Gelatin.

Gelatin is a very common animal by-product used in many types of foods and drugs. It is largely produced from the collagen-bearing tissues of any animal commonly used for purposes of human consumption--to include swine. Hides, connective tissue and dried bones are cooked in large vats. The broth is drawn off, cooked several more times, filtered, concentrated and dried. It is then ground into the powder with which we are familiar. Gelatin is commonly found in marshmallows, baked goods, and a variety of other foods. While there are biblically clean gelatins available, most of the ones on the market are not. One must only know how to find the good ones. (As we will see later, a "K" on the gelatin package does not necessarily mean that the product is clean).

Glycerin/Glycerol.

Glycerin, also called Glycerol, is a syrupy, sweet liquid which is derived from animal or plant fats and oils. It is a by-product of the soap making process and has industrial applications in a variety of areas. It is used as a solvent, an antifreeze, a plasticizer, and as a component of dynamite, cosmetics, liquid soaps, and lubricants. And, of course, it is an ingredient in many of our processed foods.

Since labeling regulations do not require manufacturers to list the source of the glycerin compounds, much of the glycerin taken into the human body comes from pork and other unclean animals. However, if one knows what to look for, it is not so difficult to stay away from pork glycerin/glycerol compounds. Glycerine derived from plants will be identified as "vegetable glycerin," "soy glycerin," or some similar notation. Products certified by the major Kosher-monitoring agencies are also from dependable sources. Glycerine is also used in many oral hygiene products to include mouthwashes and toothpastes. Again, unclean glycerin can be avoided. **Tom's of Main** toothpaste, for example, claims to use only Kosher glycerin from vegetable sources.

Monoglycerides, Diglycerides, and Triglycerides.

Another common ingredient of many processed foods--especially baked goods--is the family of fatty acids which include monoglycerides, diglycerides, and triglycerides. While these ingredients may be derived from soy or other vegetable sources, they are usually derived from slaughtered farm animals. Pork mono- and diglycerides are used in many breads and other baked goods because they soften and retard staling more effectively than do other types of monoglycerides. Monoglycerides and diglycerides are also added to many other manufactured foods because of their value as emulsifiers. Just as with glycerin, vegetable mono- and diglycerides will be so identified.

Natural Flavors/Natural Flavoring.

"Natural flavors" or "natural flavoring" is another euphemism for a myriad of possible ingredients. Many producers of "all beef" processed meat products, for example, run the "all beef" variety on the same production lines used for those varieties containing pork. Some processors have admitted that they do not even clean the lines between production runs. The "all beef" variety, therefore, may actually contain pieces of lard or other bits of swine. Rather than have to list this possibility on the packaging label, the term "natural flavors" covers all possibilities.

Natural Food Colorings.

"Natural" food colorings is another category which deserves a little investigation. "Carmine Red" for example is derived from the bodies of female cochineal insects, a Mexican and Central American variety. This coloring is sometimes found in ice cream, cherries, yogurt, fruit cocktail, meats and spices. The similar "Natural Red No. 4" is used in many cosmetic products. (Red No. 40, however, is a different coloring).

Cheeses.

The category of cheeses is another area of interest. If you read the label on almost any cheese, you will see the innocuous ingredient "enzymes." Those "enzymes" come from either animal or microbial sources, but the vast majority are from animals. The animal enzymes are usually **Pepsin** or **Rennet** (also called **Rennin**), which are digestive enzymes found in the stomachs of suckling calves or piglets. They are used to curdle milk in cheese processing. Obviously rennin from calves is clean; rennin from piglets is not. The Pepsin used for cheese-making usually comes exclusively from swine.

Products certified by the major Kosher-monitoring agencies contain only clean sources of enzymes. Kraft, although uncertified, claims that it uses only beef or microbial enzymes. Several pizza establishments claim that they only use cheeses made with clean enzymes. Pizza Hut, Little Caesar's, and Dominos make this claim, but is wise to check with local franchises. If the local employees do not know the type of enzyme used, they can usually give you a name and number of the people who know.

Other Miscellaneous Ingredients.

Other ingredients worthy of examination include: Stearates (fatty acids derived from animal or vegetable fats); and Glycogen (an animal starch found especially in the liver or muscles of mammals).

A SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM

So, how is someone supposed to keep the Almighty's dietary commandments in a pagan world? Fortunately, the "observant" Jewish world has been dealing with these complicated issues for centuries. Their efforts have made it much easier for all of us who are convicted that our Father's dietary commandments are still applicable. There is, for example, an extensive industry which monitors the suppliers, ingredients and processing operations of thousands of products which appear on the grocery shelves. Many of these biblically "clean" products appear on the shelves right next to similar products containing pork or other "unclean" ingredients. It is simply a matter of educating the discerning Believer as to which product is which.

Items that have been determined to be "Kosher"²⁴ are authorized under Federal law to carry certain symbols which signify that the products meet rigorous standards of purity. The different symbols are the equivalent of "trademarks" for a variety of rabbinically supervised monitoring agencies. Some of the agencies have a better reputation than others. The symbols from some of these more reputable organizations are shown at the end of this Appendix.

One might be surprised to discover just how many grocery items are certified as Kosher. The "O/U" and "O/K" symbols are found on scores of products and the "CHOF K" is found on many breads. Once one knows what to look for, it is really quite easy to keep the pantry shelves stocked with biblically clean items. It may break the hearts of some to have to give up a particular brand of product, but not half as much as it broke the author's heart to give up Jimmy Dean's Pure Pork sausage or boiled shrimp. It's all part of taking up one's cross and following our Messiah!

Others symbols may, or may not, be somewhat less reliable. A plain "K" on a product, for example, simply means that a rabbi was willing to certify the product as meeting his requirements for a Kosher product. This individual rabbi may, or may not, be as reliable as the organizations with an established reputation. Some rabbis hold the opinion, for example, that certain unclean products become clean once they have been processed. Since gelatin made from swine and beef can be chemically distinguished as to the source--after all the processing, the reader can come to his/her own conclusion as to the validity of such an opinion. The "K" certification can always be explored by contacting the manufacturer.

Speaking of contacting the manufacturer, manufacturers of most processed foods make available consumer information numbers where questions can be asked about ingredients. While many of the representatives may not be prepared to answer questions such as what type of enzyme goes into their cheese, they are usually willing to research the question or to give a caller a point of contact better able to answer the question.

²⁴The term "Kosher" sometimes goes beyond the strictly biblical concept of clean and unclean and includes concepts of clean and proper according to rabbinic tradition. These standards are usually either greater than, or at least equal to, those commanded by the Almighty.

Some of the More Reputable Kosher-Certifying Organizations.

SOME COMMON RELIABLE CERTIFICATION	
<p>THE OHIO KASHRUS</p> 	<p>Ohio Kashrus Rabbi Fari, Director of Supervision 6661 Meadowridge Lane, Cincinnati, OH 45237; (513) 351-4140 Rabbi Chaim Edelstein, Rabbinic Administrator.</p>
<p>THE "OK"</p> 	<p>The Organized Kashrus Laboratories 1372 Carol Street, Brooklyn, NY 11213; (718) 756-7500 Rabbi Don Yoel Levy, Kashrus Administrator.</p>
<p>THE "OU"</p> 	<p>The Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations 333 74th Ave. NY, NY 10001 (212) 563-4000 Rabbi Menachem Geruck, Rabbinic Administrator</p>
<p>THE "OV"</p> 	<p>Kosher Inspection Service of The Vaad Hoelz of St. Louis 4 Millmore Campus, St. Louis, MO 63246; (314) 569-2770 Rabbi Shalom Riskin, Chief Rabbi.</p>
<p></p>	<p>Rabbi Yehudah Bakagan 6407 Orange Street, Los Angeles, CA 90048 (213) 653-5083 FAX (213) 653-2880</p>
<p><i>Glatt & Non-Glatt of different levels</i></p>	
	<p>Rabbi Zevalun Charlop 100 E. Moshulu Pkwy, Bronx, NY 10458 (212) 960-5344</p>
	<p>Rabbi Yehoshua Heschel Deutsch (Frimaner Rav) 284 Keap St., Brooklyn, NY 11211; (718) 782-1150</p>
SOME COMMON RELIABLE CERTIFICATION	
<p>KEDASSIA</p> 	<p>Kedassia, The Joint Kashrus Committee of England 67 Amburst Park, London, England.</p>
<p>THE "KSA"</p> 	<p>Kosher Supervision of America P.O. Box 35721 Los Angeles, CA 90035 (310) 282-0444, Fax (310) 282-0505 Rabbi Bayamon Lisbon, Kashrus Administrator</p>
<p>THE LONDON BETH DIN</p> 	<p>Court of the Chief Rabbi, Adler House Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9HP, England Rabbi Berel Berkowitz, Registrar; 01-387-4300 FAX: 01-383-4934</p>
<p>THE "MK"</p> 	<p>Montreal Vaad HaIr 5491 Victoria Avenue, Montreal, Canada H1W 2P8; (514) 739-6363 FAX: (514) 739-7024 Rabbi Niznik, Kashrus Director, Rabbi Mordechai Tober, Kashrus Supervisor.</p>
<p>THE "MK"</p> 	<p>Manchester Beth Din 435 Cheetam Hill Road, Manchester, 8, England; Tel. 061-740-9711 Dayan O. Westheim, Rabbinic Administrator.</p>
<p>THE "NK"</p> 	<p>National Kashruth 1 Route 306, Morsey, NY 10952; (914) 352-4448 FAX: 914-356-9756 Rabbi Yaacov Lipschutz, President; Rabbi Mendel Simon, Administrator Field Operations Barry Eizik, Director.</p>

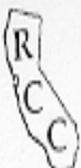
Source: Is It Kosher?, Rabbi E. Eidlitz, (Israel: Feldheim Publishers, 1993), pp. 18-27.

Some of the More Reputable Kosher-Certifying Organizations.

SOME COMMON RELIABLE CERTIFICATION:		SOME COMMON RELIABLE CERTIFICATION:		
<p>THE "cRe"</p> 	<p>Chicago Rabbinical Council 3525 West Peterson Ave, Suite 315, Chicago, IL 60659; (312) 588-1600 • FAX (718) 384-6765 Rabbi Benjamin Shandalov, Kashruth Administrator.</p>	<p>THE "GK"</p> 	<p>Glat Kasher – Nevei Achi ezer Shikan 6, Bnei Brak; Rav Shlomo Margol, (03) 769-702, Rav Baruch Roshgold, (03) 797-172.</p>	
<p>THE "CRC"</p> 	<p>The Beth Din Hameyuchad L'nyonei Kashruth of The Central Rabbinical Congress (Hisachdus Hebrabonim), 85 Division Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11211; (718) 384-6765 FAX: (718) 486-5574 Rabbi Yidel Guber, Rabbinic Administrator.</p>	<p></p> <p>Harabonai Harashit 58 King George Street, Jerusalem, P.O.B. 7525, Tel. 247112</p>	<p>THE HEART K</p> 	<p>Kehila Kasher 186 North Citrus, Los Angeles, CA 90036; (213) 935-8383 Rabbi Avramon Teichman, Rabbinic Administrator.</p>
<p>THE "DIAMOND K"</p> 	<p>Orthodox Vaad of Philadelphia 717 Callowhill Street, Philadelphia, PA 19123; (215) 923-1216 Rabbinic Board: Rabbi Aaron Felder, Rabbi Shlomo Caplan and Rabbi Yehoshua Kagraff.</p>	<p>THE "IKS"</p> 	<p>International Kasher Supervision-Corporate 3010 LBJ Freeway, Suite 905, Dallas, TX 75234 (214) 247-1042, Fax: (214) 247-1050 Rabbi Chaim Perl, Rabbinic Administrator</p>	
<p>THE "DK"</p> 	<p>Vaad Hakashrus of Dallas, Inc. (formerly Dallas Kashruth Council), 5530 Charlestown, Dallas, TX 75230; (214) 934-VAAD (fax) Rabbi David Shawl, Kashrus Administrator.</p>	<p>THE "K-COR"</p> 	<p>Vaad Harabonim of Greater Detroit and Merkaz 17071 West Ten Mile Road, Southfield, MI 48075; (313) 559-5005 Rabbi Beryl Broyle, Kashrus Administrator; Rabbi Joseph Knupnik, Kashrus Director.</p>	
<p>THE "DKC"</p> 	<p>Dallas Kashruth Council, POB 30511, Dallas, TX 75230; 73-09 136th Street, Flushing, NY 11367; (214) 750-VAAD Rabbi David Shawl, Rabbinic Administrator.</p>	<p>THE "KAJ"</p> 	<p>Beth Din of K'hal Adath Jeshurun (Breuer's) 85-93 Bennett Avenue, New York, NY 10133; (212) 923-3592, Harav Shimon Schwab, Rosh Beth Din.</p>	

Source: Is It Kosher?, Rabbi E. Eidlitz, (Israel: Feldheim Publishers, 1993), pp. 18-27.

Some of the More Reputable Kosher-Certifying Organizations.

SOME COMMON RELIABLE CERTIFICATION		SOME COMMON RELIABLE CERTIFICATION	
	<p> Rabbi Avram Feldman Atlanta, LA Rabbi Moshe Neuschloss 6 Truman Ave., New Square, NY 10977; (914) 354-6563 Rabbi Michael Schick San Francisco, CA (415) 661-4055 Rabbi Moshe Storn (Debraciner Rav) 1514 49th St., Brooklyn, NY 11219; (718) 851-5193  Rabbi Aaron Teitelbaum (Nirbater Rav) 1617 46th St., Brooklyn, NY 11204; (718) 851-1221 Rabbi Nochem Elfrain (Noam) Teitelbaum (Volzer Rav); 5808 11th Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11219; (718) 436-4685  Rav Chaim Yaakov Rottenberg Chief Orthodox Rav of Paris (Grand Rabbi) 8 Rue Pavée, Paris-4; Tel. 48.87.49.03  Rabbi Asher Zeilingsold Kashrut Administrator of Upper Midwest Kashrut 1011 Prior Avenue South, St. Paul, MN 55116; (612) 690-2137  THE "RCBC"  The Rabbinical Council of Bergen County 175 Van Nostrand Avenue, Englewood, NJ 07631; Rabbi Meier Bruckheimer, Executive Director. </p>		<p> THE "RCC" Community Kashrus Division of the Rabbinical Council of California 1122 S. Robertson Blvd. Suite 8, Los Angeles, CA 90035; (310) 271-4160 FAX: (310) 271-7147 Rabbi Joshua Berkowitz, Chairman, Rabbi Union, Rabbinic Administrator, Rabbi Binyomin Lisbon, Kashrus Administrator With Vaad of L.A. approval only. Rabbinical Council of Orange County & Long Beach 5702 Clark Drive, Huntington Beach, CA 92649 (714) 846-2285, Kosher Hot Line (310) 426-4894 THE "SCROLL K" Vaad Hachakmas of Denver 1350 Vrain St, Denver, CO 80204; (303) 995-9349 Rabbi Y. Feldberger, Rabbinic Administrator. THE "SEFER TORAH-KASHER" The Vaad Harabbenim of Flatbush 1618 Coney Island Avenue, Brooklyn NY 11230; (718) 951-8585 Rabbi Eli Skaisi, Rabbinic Administrator. THE "STAR K" Vaad Hachakmas of the Orthodox Jewish Council of Baltimore 11 Warren Road, Baltimore, MD (410) 484-4110 Rabbi Moshe Heinemann, Rabbinic Administrator. </p>

Source: Is It Kosher?, Rabbi E. Eidlitz, (Israel: Feldheim Publishers, 1993), pp. 18-27.

Some of the More Reputable Kosher-Certifying Organizations.

SOME COMMON RELIABLE CERTIFICATION:

ADAS YEREIM OF VIENNER Rabbi Azriel Yehuda Lebovitz
27-31 Lee Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11211;
(718) 387-3680

ADATH YEREIM Rav Y.D. Frankfurter, Adath Yereim of Paris
10 Rue Cadet, 9e (Metro Cadet);
Tel. 42.46.36.47

AGUDAH The Beth Din Zedek of Agudath Israel,
Moetzes Hachashrus, 2 Press St., Jerusalem,
POB 513;
Tel 02-385251-4

BAIS DIN OF CROWN HEIGHTS Bais Din of Crown Heights
788 Eastern Parkway, Room 212, Brooklyn,
N.Y. 11213;
Rabbi Dov Ber Leventov, Head Supervisor;
(718) 774-7504

BEDATZ The Bais Din Tzedek of the Eida Hachareidis
of Jerusalem
Binyanei Zupnick 26A, Rechov Strauss, Jerusalem;
Tel. 02-251651 / 231084 FAX 02-254975
TELEFAX 972-2-254975

SOME COMMON RELIABLE CERTIFICATION:

BELZ The Bais Din Tzedek of K'hal Machzikei
Hadas
4 Shefel St., Jerusalem, Tel. 02-385832
4 Belza St., B'nai B'rak, Tel. 795414
FAX: 02-373884

THE "CHOF K" Kosher Supervision Service
1444 Queen Ann Road, Teaneck, NJ 07666;
(201) 837-0500
Rabbi Aharon Felder, Director of Supervision.

THE CALIFORNIA "K" Kehilla Kosher
(Igud Hachashrus of L.A.)
186 N. Citrus,
Los Angeles, CA 90036
(213) 935-8383
Rabbi Avrohom Teichman,
Rabbinical Administrator.

THE "CHOF KOSHER" Rabb Solomon B. Shapiro
73-09 136th Street, Flushing, NY 11367;
(718) 263-1574

THE "COR" Kashruth Council - Orthodox Division
Toronto Jewish Congress,
4600 Bathurst Street, Willowdale,
Ontario M2R 3V2;
(416) 635-9550
Rabbi M. Levin, Executive Director.

Source: Is It Kosher?, Rabbi E. Eidlitz, (Israel: Feldheim Publishers, 1993), pp. 18-27.

Some of the More Reputable Kosher-Certifying Organizations.

SOME COMMON RELIABLE CERTIFICATION:

THE "TEXAS K" Rabbi Perl,
POB 30662, Dallas, TX 75230


VAAD Vaad HaKashrus of the Five Towns
859 Peninsula Blvd, Woodmere, NY 11598;
(516) 569-4536
Rabbi Moshe Chait, Kashrus Administrator.


VAAD HARABONIM OF FLORIDA Orthodox Rabbinical Council of South Florida
(Vaad Harabonim De Darom Florida)
3700 Sheridan Avenue, Miami Beach, FL 33140;
(305) 865-9851 673-0115;
Rabbi Tzvi Rosenbaum, Executive Secretary.


THE "VH"
THE "KVH" Vaad Harabonim (Vaad Hakashrus) of
Massachusetts
177 Tremont Street, Boston, MA 02111
(617) 426-6268/2139
Rabbi Abraham Halbfinger, Rabbinic Administrator.


THE "VH" Vaad Hoelz of Cincinnati
6446 Strover Avenue, Cincinnati, OH 45237;
(513) 731-4671
Rabbi Zelig Sharfstein, Rav;
Rabbi Joshua Goldman,
Rabbinic Administrator.


SOME COMMON RELIABLE CERTIFICATION:

THE "VHCD" Vaad Hakashrus of the Capital District
P.O. Box 9010, Albany, NY 12209;
(518) 489-1530
Rabbi Moshe Bomzer, Rav Hamachshir.
Rabbi Ysaacov Kellman, Kashrus Administrator


THE "VHQ" Vaad Harabonim of Queens
90-45 Myrtle Avenue, Glendale, NY 11385;
(718) 847-9206
Rabbi Shaul Chail, Chairman,
Kashrus Committee;
Executive Vice President, Rabbi Y.A. Sladowsky.


THE "VK" Vancouver Kashrus
3476 Oak Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6H 2L8;
(604) 736-7607;
Rabbi Mordechai Paerztein, Rabbinic Administrator.


THE "VHB" The Vaad Hakashrus of Buffalo
P.O.B. 755, Williamsville, NY 14221;
(716) 634-3990
Rabbi Naphtali Barnstein, Rabbinic Administrator.


It is important to note, that these agencies frequently try to inform the consumer the full status of the products under their supervision. Following are some of their designations with their meanings.

D - Dairy
DE - Dairy Equipment (no actual dairy in ingredients, hence it can be eaten even after a dairy meal)
P - Passover - Kosher for all year including Passover (Note: "P" NEVER designates pareve)
Pareve - Non-dairy
Chotav Yisroel - Kosher supervised milk used in ingredients
Pas Yisroel - Jewish baked foods
Yoshon - Not from current grain crop

Source: Is It Kosher?, Rabbi E. Eidlitz, (Israel: Feldheim Publishers, 1993), pp. 18-27.