

The Forbidden Food

By Matthew Day

Genesis 3:1 CJB Now the serpent was more crafty than any wild animal which Adonai, God, had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You are not to eat from any tree in the garden'?"

God gave Adam a command to NOT eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The consequence was death! Death for eating a piece of fruit? What was it about this tree that made it sinful to eat from it?

Leviticus 11:45 CJB For I am Adonai, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God. Therefore you are to be holy, because I am holy.

The tree was a tree of knowledge of good AND evil. It was a mixture. It was the opposite of holy. It wasn't about the physical fruit. Rather it was about the spiritual mixture contained in the fruit. When Adam ate of the fruit, he ceased to separate the holy from the unholy, good from evil.

Leviticus 11:44 CJB For I am Adonai your God; therefore, consecrate yourselves and be holy, for I am holy; and do not defile yourselves with any kind of swarming creature that moves along the ground.

This scripture is found in the passage about clean and unclean animals. Many Christians view these as health laws that are no longer needed. That makes logical sense, but as we learned from the Tree incident (Genesis 3) that is not necessarily the case.

Notice that this scripture talks about holiness in the passage about clean and unclean animals. Why? I believe it is because these commandments have to do with holiness. Distinguishing between the clean and unclean sets us apart. Just like with the tree of knowledge, it is about holiness not health.

Leviticus 11:41 KJV And every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth *shall be* an abomination; it shall not be eaten.

If it were simply a matter of health, why does God call it an abomination?

1 Corinthians 3:16 CJB Don't you know that you people are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?

Let's look at a few scriptures that at first glance may seem to say that we can now eat pork.

1) Acts 10:10-28

In this passage God shows Peter a sheet full of animals including unclean animals and a voice tells Peter to eat. Peter says no and the voice says “What God hath cleansed, *that* call not thou common.” Because of this, many Christians believe that God was saying all animals were clean. Consider another point of view.

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

This scripture shows the main purpose of the vision. No MAN is to be called unclean. Why then did God show clean and unclean animals? It is a common pattern in the Bible: God used something that Peter could relate to to show him something spiritual.

Finally notice that Peter never ate from the sheet. Surely if he understood that the dietary laws were done away with (whether then or before), he would have eaten from the sheet. But he didn't.

2) Mark 7

In this passage Yeshua's disciples are accused of eating with unwashed hands. Yeshua then says that nothing going into a man can defile a man, but only that coming out (from his heart) can defile a man. The logical conclusion is that since pork enters the body, it cannot defile a man. Consider another point of view.

Just as the tree incident was not about the physical fruit, I do not believe that clean and unclean animals is about the physical food. Rather it is about the spiritual mixing and disobedience that comes out of a man's heart when he eats the food. This fits perfectly with Yeshua's statement.

3) Genesis 9:3

This verse seems to say that all animals were for food. However it says “just as I gave you the green plants” implying a relationship between the giving of the plants and the giving of the meat. Not all plants are good for food (for example: various poisonous plants). Therefore, it could be inferred that not all meat is good for food. This is further supported by the fact that God had Noah distinguish between the clean and unclean animals not much earlier.

So, I leave you with this question: Are we allowed to eat unclean animals now, or is it just another spin on that ancient lie “Did God really say...”?