

“The Truth As We Know It”
The Dietary Law

4/12/15

Today I want to address the Jewish Dietary laws. I want to say from the start that this is one of the laws that Jesus modified from the strict Jewish tradition to a more moderate stand . To understand this law we need to go back to the Garden of Eden and to Adam and Eve our first parents. God gave to them all the vegetables and nuts and fruits to both man and beast. They were Vegetarians before the flood as is shown in Gen 1:29-30 and we read, "And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat (or food). And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creeps upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for food: and it was so." Now that was for the 1600 plus years before the flood.

But then after they got off of the ark when the flood waters had receded, God gave them meat from all the animals even those that they would later consider unclean. We see this in Gen 9:1-3 and we read, "And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moves upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things." That is everything that moves!

At that time everything was considered eatable! Even foods that we would be uncomfortable eating today in America! Like rodents, snakes, & all kinds of insects! Though they may not have been desirable, they were allowed.

Then when the law was given through Moses, God told the Children of Israel that they needed to distinguish between the clean foods and the unclean foods. As we see in Deu 14:3-6 and we read, "Thou shall not eat any abominable thing. These *are* the beasts which ye shall eat: the ox, the sheep, and the goat, The hart, and the roebuck, and the fallow deer, and the wild goat, and the mountain goat, and the wild ox, and the chamois. And every beast that parts the hoof, and cleaves the cleft into two claws, *and*

chews the cud among the beasts, that ye shall eat."

Then God also tell us what animals are considered unclean or unfit for food as is shown in Deu 14:7-10 and we read, "Nevertheless these ye shall not eat of them that chew the cud, or of them that divide the cloven hoof; *as* the camel, and the hare, and the Coney: for they chew the cud, but divide not the hoof; therefore they are unclean unto you. And the swine, because it divides the hoof, yet chews not the cud, it *is* unclean unto you: ye shall not eat of their flesh, nor touch their dead carcass. These ye shall eat of all that are in the waters: all the fish that have fins and scales shall ye eat: And whatsoever hath not fins and scales ye may not eat; it is unclean unto you."

Of the fowl, these are considered clean & unclean. All birds not considered unclean are considered clean and used for food. But all the ravenous birds, eagles, crows, owls, pelican, vulture and all scavenger birds are unclean. So the chicken, ducks, geese, pheasant, quail and similar birds are considered clean as shown in Deuteronomy 14:11-19.

Jesus began to modify this law in His statement to the scribes and Pharisees in Mat 15:10-11 when he said, "And he called to him the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand: it is not that which entered into the mouth that defiles the man; but that which proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man." He goes on to say in Mat 15:17-20 and we read, "Perceive ye not, that whatsoever goes into the mouth passes into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But the things which proceed out of the mouth come forth out of the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings: these are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands (and by extension, foods considered unclean) these defile not the man."

Peter tells the story of his vision concerning the Gentile conversion at Cornelius's house in Acts 10th chapter. as he told it in Act 11:5-10 and we read, "I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me: Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw four footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat. But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered

into my mouth. But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven." Now I understand that the primary meaning of this event was to show that God had opened the door of salvation to us unclean Gentiles, but the changing of the dietary laws is also included and undeniable.

From that time, Paul and other apostles began to fellowship openly with the converted gentile Christians, eating at their tables, sleeping in their beds. Paul tells us in 1Co 10:27 and we read, "If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake." And in Rom 14:14, "I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteems any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean." And in Rom 14:20-21, "...All things indeed *are* pure; but *it is* evil for that man who eats with offence. It *is* good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbles, or is offended, or is made weak." Paul's concern was not in the foods we eat, but rather making sure that what we allow ourselves to do would not offend a brother or sister who's conscious may be weak.

Paul also tells us in 1Co 10:25 and we read, "Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, (or Market) that eat, asking no question for conscience sake:" And in 1Timothy 4:4-5, "For every creature of God *is* good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer." By these New Testament scriptures we can clearly see that God has once again allowed a change in the dietary laws to that more in line with the time between the flood and the giving of the law of Moses.

This is a part of the law that Jesus modified as we have shown. There are plenty of reasons why kosher foods are probably better for us and we might all be better off if we followed them, The same is true with vegetarians. The fact that Adam & Eve and all the people and animals that lived before the flood were vegetarians and they lived very long lives, is an indication that all the necessary nutrition we need is in the fruits and vegetables that are available to us. But I have too confess that I enjoy a good juicy steak, or a heaping plate of fried catfish, or shrimp, or a slice of ham on a sandwich. I have that right and need not feel any guilt in eating it. I always thank God for my food.

Most Christian organizations that honor the Sabbath also feel the need to keep the dietary laws as well. But that is a mistake in my opinion. We are asked to honor the Sabbath as a part of honoring God as a part of the Ten Commandments. I believe that the mistake people make is that they equate honoring the Sabbath as a legal requirement that will somehow contribute to their personal righteousness. If honoring the Sabbath makes us more righteous, then we need to also keep the dietary laws, but keeping the law does not make us righteous! We read in Gal 2:16, "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." And in Rom 3:20 we read, "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight:"

Trying to keep the law for righteousness is a trap that we need to avoid at all costs because there is no stopping place! If we attempt to do so, we do away with the need for a Savior and that is tragic and utterly hopeless.

Listen again next week.

This we do know, The Bible is God's Word, God's word is true, Jesus Christ is God's son, Jesus died to save us from our sin, Without Jesus we are eternally lost. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we might be saved. Atheism is a temporary condition for every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord! Jesus stands ready to save you now, Will you call on Him today?

Until next week, God bless.