



# Are All Animals Good Food?

*Is all meat good for food? Did Jesus “cleanse” all meat? Did Peter’s vision prove it? What did Paul mean when he said that nothing is unclean “of itself?” Does it matter? Here are the Bible answers!*

BY DAVID C. PACK

**D**o you enjoy good health? Consider the health of people around you. Most people eat what satisfies their taste buds instead of their bodies’ needs. The result is a world filled with people who are overweight, underweight, low in energy and plagued by disease. Some people do not even

know what good health feels like. This should not be!

The vast majority of human beings are not taught to be careful about what or how much they eat. Their eating habits—mostly bad—were formed when they were young. Like babies, most people put *anything* into their mouths—then

wonder why they lack energy and vitality. As a result, many spend much time and money seeing doctors because of sickness.

When comparing most people’s eating habits to those of *grown-up* babies, Herbert W. Armstrong, in his article *Is All Animal Flesh Good Food?*, wrote:

**“Well, one might wonder if any of us has grown up! Most of us adults still seem to think that anything we can stuff in our mouths is good for food. About the only difference between us and the baby is that baby puts into his mouth whatever looks good, while we employ the sense of taste in deciding what goes into our mouths.**

**“Your stomach is your fuel tank. Your automobile’s tank is its stomach. You wouldn’t think of pouring just any old thing that will pour into the ‘stomach’ of your car. You know that your car was not made to consume and ‘digest’ fuel oil, water, milk, or kerosene.**

**“Yes, we are very careful what we ‘feed’ our automobile—and totally careless and indifferent about what we feed ourselves and our children!**

**“But did you know there are many kinds of poisons? Potassium cyanide will kill you very quickly. Some poisons will result in death within a few hours or a few days. But very few seem to know there are other poisons people mistakenly eat as foods which result in premature death after continuous usage for, say, ten, or thirty, or fifty years.**

**“The only difference between these poisons we falsely call foods and potassium cyanide is the relative number of minutes, hours, or years it takes to accomplish its mission.”**

King David understood that his body was a marvelous piece of God’s creative genius when he said, “I am fearfully and wonderfully made” (Psa. 139:14). *You* are also “wonderfully made.” Since God made you, you should look to His Word for instruction regarding what kind of animal flesh He has made to enter your stomach—*your* “fuel tank.” You will discover that *what meat you eat* is not a trivial matter. It is much more important than you realize!

As with all Bible subjects, we do not find everything about *meat* in one place. God wants us to “search the scriptures” (Acts 17:11), and build a complete picture. We must consider *all* that the Bible says about eating animal flesh.

### **The Animals in Noah’s Ark**

All Sunday School children have heard the story of Noah’s ark. You may know

that both clean *and* unclean animals were taken into the ark. Together with his family, Noah was to take *seven pairs* of each *clean* animal and *one pair* of each *unclean* animal (Gen. 7:2).

What does the Bible mean by the terms “clean” and “unclean”? Does it mean an inherent property or quality of certain animals—or does it mean their physical cleanliness—their hygiene?

Noah understood the instruction—that there was a clear distinction between the two. It was not a distinction that he took upon himself to define. God had previously made it known to him, either by direct revelation or through one of His few faithful servants of earlier times. Noah’s great-grandfather Enoch had “walked with God” for 300 years (Gen. 5:22; Heb. 11:5, 13) and would have been aware of the distinction between clean and unclean animals.

Only eight people entered the ark with all the animals. Noah was told to take a supply of all kinds of food to sustain himself, his family and all the animals during their time on board (Gen. 6:21). A year and ten days after entering, they came out. Notice: “And Noah built an altar unto the LORD; and took of every *clean* beast, and of every *clean* fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the LORD smelled a sweet savor” (Gen. 8:20-21).

This event reveals one aspect of God’s separation of animals into one of two categories. Burnt offerings, those “acceptable to the Lord,” were taken only from the *clean* category. In Genesis 4, we also see that Abel, a keeper of sheep, brought God an “acceptable” offering from the firstlings of his flock. Therefore, it can be concluded that lambs and sheep were considered clean.

### **Humans Permitted To Eat Meat**

After Noah left the ark, God blessed him and his sons, and put the “dread of man” on every beast, bird and fish (Gen. 9:1-2). Next, when speaking of the entire animal kingdom, God said to Noah, “Into your hand are they delivered. Every moving thing that lives shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things. But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall you not eat” (vs. 2-4).

This is the first biblical record of God’s permission for man to use animal

flesh for food. This instruction includes the forbidding of any consumption of blood. There is no evidence that God had previously either forbidden or permitted man to eat animal flesh. Neither is there any record of humans eating flesh. We are not told whether God gave any more specific instructions to Noah or his descendants about eating meat.

Many read verse 3 and assume that God made all living things good for meat. But notice that it also sets the standard for measuring this: “even as the green herb.”

Using this phrase as authority, we can no more eat *all* types of meat than we can eat all plants, including poisonous ones. (Recall Genesis 1:30.) Noah had already taken seven pairs of clean and one pair of unclean animals into the ark because: (1) He needed food, and (2) he must have known the difference between clean and unclean animals. Had Noah eaten one of the unclean animals (pig, etc.), they could not have reproduced.

Notice that “by sevens” (Gen. 7:2) is plural, but “by two” is singular. The two does not have an “s.” There were only two of each unclean animal taken into the ark. The Moffatt Translation makes this clear: “Take seven pairs, male and female, of every clean animal, and one pair, male and female, of the unclean animals...”

On a side note, some people question whether human beings ate meat prior to the flood. Since we know that “All scripture is given by inspiration of God” (II Tim. 3:16), gaps in the Bible record *can* be for our learning. Speculation can sometimes be helpful when examining reliable historical records that are consistent with Scripture. However, correct biblical *doctrine* is never based on speculation.

Whether God’s servants ate meat prior to the flood is not stated in the Bible. Arguments can be presented to support both possibilities, but they are inconclusive. We should be concerned with what God *does say* that He requires—today!

### **God Ate Veal**

Genesis 18 describes a time when three “men” visited Abraham. One of them was the Lord Himself—as the Angel of the Lord—and the other two *were* angels (vs. 1-2; 19:1). Abraham served them bread, butter, milk and a *tender calf* (18:5, 8).

That is the first record of *anyone* eating animal flesh and none of them were human. For this special occasion, God appeared in *human form*. Though He did not *need* food, He was pleased to accept this hospitality. Consider! Abraham must have been familiar with the task of properly preparing meat, for he knew how to quickly slaughter and dress it for unexpected guests (vs. 7).

### The Genesis Record

When Isaac was old (Gen. 27:1) and his eyesight was failing, he sent his older son, Esau, to hunt game and prepare some “savory food” (*venison* according to the *Authorized Version*). His younger son, Jacob, “fetched” two choice young goats. Then his mother made “savory food, such as his father loved.” This proves that Isaac regularly ate certain kinds of meat and is the first record of any human doing so.

The rest of Genesis says nothing more about eating animals. We can see that, from Abraham’s time onward, the flesh and milk of certain animals did occasionally form part of a meal. As with Noah, it is clear that the animals that were eaten were of the same kinds as those sacrificed as burnt offerings.

### The Book of Exodus

After the Passover, God separated the nation of Israel from the Egyptians (Ex. 11:7). He delivered them from slavery and led them through the Red Sea into the wilderness. Once there, Israel soon murmured against Moses because of hunger and thirst and yearned for the flesh pots that they had enjoyed in Egypt. God then promised them “flesh” at twilight and “bread” in the morning. The flesh He sent was *quail* and the bread was *manna* (16:12-18).

This is the Bible’s first mention of the use of *birds* for food. In Genesis 15:9, Abraham had been commanded to bring a turtledove and a pigeon as an offering to God, but there is no record of any birds having been eaten prior to the Exodus account.

### God’s Covenant With Israel at Sinai

God set the children of Israel apart from all other nations by a covenant. This covenant made them a kingdom of priests

and a holy nation (Ex. 19:6). The entire nation heard God’s voice as He gave them the Ten Commandments. Later, through Moses, He gave them many *other* laws. Some pertained to the care and sacrifice of animals (Ex. 20-22).

### Leviticus, Deuteronomy and Unclean Meat

In the books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy, God reveals His *laws* concerning what kind of meats are clean and unclean for food. His servants are commanded not to eat any unclean meat.

In both of these books, there is a “meat” chapter, in which God explains a fundamental distinction regarding animal flesh. This distinction is the same as that which Noah understood about the animals that he took into the ark.

Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14 identify which categories of quadrupeds, fish and insects may be eaten. God’s instruction is emphatic and leaves no room for personal interpretation. The Bible repeatedly records God stating that certain animals are “unclean to you.” Sometimes He adds, “you may not eat of them.” Other times He says, “You shall not eat any abominable thing,” and still other times He says, “They shall be an abomination unto you.” (Certain translations use the word *detestable* in place of *abomination*.) Finally, He often commands not to even “touch their dead carcass.”

Take the time to read these two chapters carefully! Notice how many times God repeats Himself for emphasis. There can be no mistaking the clarity of His instruction.

These chapters give examples from each of these three categories. Twenty examples of birds are given, but only of those that may *not* be eaten (Lev. 11:13-19). Reptiles (vs. 29-30), vermin (vs. 41-42) and other creeping things may *not* be eaten—except certain jumping (“leaping”) insects (vs. 21-22). Many kinds of fish are clean and many kinds of fish and sea creatures are not. Genesis 1:31 explains that *everything* God created “was good”—*but just not for food!*

Isaiah 66:3-4 shows that people sometimes used a mixture of clean and unclean animals in sacrifice to God. Throughout the Bible, we see that none of the creatures God calls *unclean* were ever acceptable to Him in sacrifice.

Isaiah 65:2-5 and 66:17 show how strongly God feels about those who reject His instruction not to eat swine’s flesh and other abominable things. Most of you are familiar with the saying “holier than thou.” It comes directly from Isaiah 65:5 and is a phrase that people who eat unclean meat, including swine’s flesh, were using to *excuse their actions*.

God is blunt! He considers these attitudes and practices to be a noxious “smoke” entering His “nose” all day long, and that they “provoke Him to anger.”

A comprehensive list of clean and unclean creatures is included at the end of this article. However, a brief description of *birds*, *sea creatures* and *land animals* is critical to understand the distinctions between clean and unclean animals.

### Birds

The Bible does not provide a simple means of identifying clean birds, as it does for other creatures. Through a careful comparison of all the unclean birds with those shown to be clean, it is apparent that all clean birds have *six distinct features* that are not, in every case, common to unclean birds. These features can be used for determining the status of birds not mentioned in the Bible.

The six features for clean birds are: (1) They have a crop or craw; (2) they have a gizzard with a double lining; (3) their feet have an elongated middle toe and a hind toe; (4) their toes are spread so that they have three front toes on one side of a perch and the hind toe on the opposite side; (5) they cannot be birds of prey; (6) they catch food thrown to them while they are in the air but they first bring it to the ground and divide it, before eating it. Unclean birds eat food in the air or tear it apart on the ground and eat as they tear.

### Fish and Sea Creatures

Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14 explain that only fish with fins *and* scales are clean for food. This eliminates all types of shellfish, including crabs, crayfish, shrimp, lobsters, clams, oysters, and other mussels, eels, squids and octopuses. Many of these creatures lack fins and must remain on the bottom to feed.

Some sea creatures have fins but no scales. Examples are sharks, whales, catfish and many others.

## Land Animals

As with sea creatures, there are two basic criteria for determining how clean and unclean land animals are distinguished from one another.

Clean animals “part the hoof...and chew the cud.” The scripture says that they are “cloven-footed.” Pigs are cloven-footed, but do not chew the cud. The hyrax (a type of rodent) chews the cud but has toes and claws.

## Disease and Filth

We have seen that God has called certain creatures abominable or detestable. He does this for a reason!

Consider the nature of mice and rats. They mark their trail to a food source with urine droplets carrying a deadly pathogen known as *Toxoplasmosis*. It only reproduces in felines. It remains dormant in the bodies of many mammals—especially rodents—until they are eaten by humans. This pathogen kills, blinds or causes crippling brain damage to unborn babies.

Estimates show that sixty-five to eighty percent of the world’s population have contracted it by middle age. God knew this could happen and prohibited keeping a vessel of food touched by any mouse, mole, or creeping thing. The Israelites were to break any vessel that was touched and throw away all of its contents (Lev. 11:33-34). Yet statistics today show that we systematically tolerate small amounts of mouse droppings in our food supply.

Rabbits carry a less common disease called *Tularemia* (rabbit fever). Those who eat and handle rabbits are susceptible to contracting this sometimes fatal disease.

Clams often rest at the mouths of rivers and ingest sewage flowing past them. People who eat such clams are eating many types of concentrated toxins that often result in death to those who do this.

God’s laws work. Mankind could avoid much illness if His instructions were followed and His warnings heeded!

## Scavengers

Most of the creatures identified as unclean are actually scavengers. God designed them to be “garbage collec-

tors”—a kind of “environmental cleanup crew.” These scavengers are capable of ingesting and processing tremendous amounts of poison and waste in short periods of time.

Some scavengers, such as catfish, crabs and lobsters, are bottom-feeders. Others, like vultures and crows, eat dead, rotting flesh. This assists in the breakdown of organic matter and bacteria, so that they do not remain toxic or dangerous to the environment.

Pigs can eat rattlesnakes and have often been used to clear areas where golf courses are planned. Anything a pig eats turns to flesh in approximately six hours. Cows require twenty-four or more. Hogs actually have specially designed pus ducts located above their hooves to regularly drain poisons from their bodies. They carry a number of viruses and diseases, including trichina worms, which, if ingested by humans, can cause the painful and sometimes fatal disease known as *Trichinosis*. Also, pig flesh is high in cholesterol, which is one of the first things doctors tell patients with coronary artery disease to avoid in their diets.

Misguided mankind has domesticated pigs for food and put them in pigsties, literally forcing them to wallow in their own filth. This can cause their pus ducts to become plugged. Thus, those people who eat them ingest even more poison than God ever intended even filthy pigs to carry!

While many scavengers are far from beautiful, these creatures actually demonstrate, in their own way, the perfect planning and creative genius of God!

## What About Blood And Fat?

God strictly prohibits the consumption of the *blood* of any flesh (Lev. 17:10-14). This prohibition is emphasized throughout the Bible (Acts 15:20, 29; 21:25). God says that the life is in the blood. It carries away various toxins, viruses and bacteria for elimination.

God also forbids eating *fat* (Lev. 3:17; 7:23). Animals and humans store poisons and viruses in their fat. When people eat fat, they are ingesting additional poisons. (The fat of clean fowl is not expressly forbidden. The fat or oil of clean fish is not mentioned.)

We should be aware of one side note. While the expression “to eat the fat” is

sometimes used in the Bible (Gen. 45:18; Neh. 8:10), it has a figurative meaning. It means to enjoy the best of something good. This statement does not counter God’s instruction in other places.

## Did Christ Permit All Meats to be Eaten?

Many Bible critics cite Mark 7:1-15 as license from Christ to eat all kinds of meat. Did Christ do away with the prohibition of unclean meats? Did He say that He had “purged all meats”?

Ancient Israel’s dietary laws were well known by the Jews of Christ’s time. The self-righteous Pharisees criticized Christ’s disciples for eating bread without first washing their hands (vs. 2). Christ’s response was to severely reprimand them for their rejection of God’s commandments (vs. 6-13). He then summoned the crowd to hear what He was about to say (vs. 14). He told them that whatever goes into a man from outside cannot defile the man, but what comes *out of* a man can (vs. 15-23).

Many read verse 19 and conclude that one can eat *any* kind of meat because Christ has “purged all meats.” Most people neither carefully read verse 19, nor read past it as they should—and thereby miss the entire point of Christ’s instruction! Even Christ’s own disciples did not immediately understand His teaching (vs. 17, 18). Matthew’s account shows that Peter asked Him to explain it (Matt. 15:15).

Christ clearly was emphasizing that it is the evil things that come *out of* people—from within, out of their mouth and heart—that defile them. He went on to explain that to eat with unwashed hands does not spiritually defile anyone (Matt. 15:20; Mark 7:20-23). This entire account was written to address the futility of the Pharisees’ elaborate handwashing before meals!

When privately explaining the parable to His disciples, Christ gave a frank description of the human body’s normal elimination of any accidentally ingested dirt. He said that such dirt “goes out into the draught”—the sewer. There was never any Old Testament command to avoid eating food with dirty hands. Christ used this occasion to condemn a man-made tradition that had been elevated above the importance of getting rid of evil, rotten

*attitudes and thoughts* that are inside all human beings, thus defiling them!

Notice that, in Luke 11:38, Christ's Pharisee host was astonished that He sat to dine *without first washing His hands*. Christ showed that it is much more important to control what words come out of our mouths, and what thoughts come out of our minds, than to worry about dirty hands (Mark 7:20-23).

The Mark 7 and Matthew 15 accounts of this event have been misrepresented. Many false teachers over the last 19 centuries have convinced their followers that Christ annulled the long-understood distinction between clean and unclean meats!

Let's examine more closely how they have done this!

The King James Version of the Bible renders Mark 7:18, 19 as: "...Do you not perceive, that...it...goes out into the draught, purging all meats?" The Revised Standard Version *inserts three extra words* after "draught,"—the added words are printed in italics because, as the Revisers' Preface explains, they "did not appear to be necessarily involved in the Greek." The revisers also changed the punctuation at this point, thereby producing a completely different statement! They altered it to read: "...it...goes out into the draught?" *This he said, making all meats clean.*"

The new rendering of this verse is a perversion of Christ's words to His disciples! It changes them into a categorical statement, presented, almost casually, in this and later versions, *as if it were* an explanatory comment added by Mark. It is a deceptive attempt to establish a completely *new understanding* of what God has made clean. The phrasing of these seven words changes the entire meaning of what Christ actually said. This account is twisted into a *license* to eat everything from aardvarks to zebras!

This does not seem to be an innocent error in translation, but rather appears to be a blatant, dishonest forgery! Many post-1885 versions of the New Testament perpetuate this myth, several adding their own elaborations into Mark 7:19. Be careful with modern versions and translations, especially any that are primarily paraphrases designed for easy reading.

### **Peter's Vision**

Acts 10 contains another account often used to support eating all kinds of animal

flesh. It has been misrepresented and misunderstood by careless reading.

The setting is that the apostle Peter was praying on a housetop, around mid-day, and fell into a trance, during which he experienced a vision sent by God.

Peter was a Jew and regarded uncircumcised Gentiles as defiled and common. This vision forever altered the way Peter and all Christians were to view Gentiles.

The vision started with a sheet descending from heaven containing all kinds of animals and birds. Then God's voice called to Peter, and commanded him three times to "arise, kill and eat." Though he *was* hungry, he refused each time saying, "Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean" (vs. 14). Each time, God answered, "What God has cleansed, that call not you common" (vs. 15).

Though many theologians try to assert that God cleansed all forms of meat through this vision, Peter was the one who saw the vision. By verse 17, two verses later, he still did not know what it meant! He was certainly sure what it did *NOT* mean and said so, three times!

Incidentally, if the Mark 7 account had actually cleansed all meat, understand that it had occurred over a decade earlier. By the time of this vision, Peter would have already eaten unclean meat many times.

The account continues with Peter entering the home of a devout Italian man—a Gentile! God had sent three Gentile messengers from Cornelius (a Roman centurion) to summon Peter to Cornelius' house. God told Peter to go with them, doubting nothing.

God enlightened Peter during the next two days' events. This vision had been preparing him for important new understanding about Gentiles, which would otherwise have been too difficult for his Jewish mind to accept. Notice verse 28. From this point forward, God wanted him to understand *that he must never regard any HUMAN BEING as common or unclean*. The vision was not talking about unclean meat!

This represented a staggering shift in understanding and practice for a Jewish fisherman who had once marveled that Jesus would even talk with a Samaritan (Gentile) woman (John 4:27). In verse 9 of John's account, Christ had said, "for Jews have no dealings with Samaritans."

This would have been Peter's understanding from that time forward.

The real meaning of this account—of God opening the way for non-Israelites to be converted—is well understood by theologians and Bible scholars. Nevertheless, many professing Christians attempt to justify the eating of unclean meat today by distorting the real meaning of Peter's vision. In Peter's own words, we read, "God has shown me that I should not call *any man* common or unclean" (Acts 10:28). That is the point!

This account was not to demonstrate that *God had cleansed* crocodiles, crustaceans and crows. It was to show that He was calling, granting repentance, baptizing and giving His Holy Spirit, to *Gentiles* (vs. 44, 48)!

### **All in the Mind?**

Another scripture is frequently used to support the idea that all meat is clean for food.

Romans 14:14 states, "Nothing is unclean of itself, but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean." This verse is rendered this way in almost every version of the New Testament. On the surface, this seems to make the entire concept of unclean meat little more than a personal viewpoint. God's clear distinction, which in Leviticus 11:46-47 He calls "the law," would be set aside as having no basis in reality. This idea would make any lists or distinctions in the Bible about unclean meats irrelevant.

The apostle Paul *appears* to be saying that this is what he has become convinced of—by "the Lord Jesus Himself." Does the verse really mean what it seems to say? Let's examine Paul's words.

The whole chapter is a lesson to those *strong in the faith* (Rom. 15:1) not to offend one who is *weak in the faith* (14:1), especially by eating or drinking anything that would trouble the weak brother's conscience. Such a brother might be a vegetarian or one who abstains from drinking wine (vs. 2, 21). It could also be a reference to those described in I Corinthians 8:10. There, some were upset by seeing fellow Christians eating in an idol's temple, and presumed that what was being eaten had been offered to idols. That chapter similarly warns the "strong" not to cause the "weak" to stumble as a

result of the liberty the “strong” enjoy because of knowledge they possess (vs. 1-4, 7, 11).

In both cases, the subject has absolutely nothing to do with the distinction between clean and unclean meat. But wait a minute! Does not Romans 14:14 plainly state that *nothing is unclean of itself*?

Our English translations do, but the Greek, in which it was originally written, does not! The Greek word used here is *koinon*. It appears three times within this one verse and it does *not* mean *unclean*. It should be translated “common.” This is the often-used biblical term that is the equivalent of *defiled*. Recall Matthew 15 and Mark 7. In those accounts, the similar word, *koinos*, is consistently translated as a form of *defile*.

This is also one of the two words used in Acts 10:14 to relate what Peter said during his vision. There, it is correctly translated to show that he had never eaten anything *common* (or unclean). The Greek word for *unclean* is *akatharton*. These two words do *not* have the same meaning. *Akatharton* means *unclean* and is used to distinguish clean creatures from unclean creatures. *Koinon* means *common*, and should have been so translated.

It is interesting to note that every translator and reviser, almost without exception, from A.D. 1611 forward, mistranslated this word as “unclean” in Romans 14:14. Somehow they always managed to get it right *everywhere else* in the New Testament. The context has *nothing at all* to do with *the distinction* between clean and unclean meat.

Why be concerned about something being *common*, if it is already *unclean*? What would be the difference?

Even before the Israelites were forbidden to eat unclean animals, they were prohibited from eating any animal that was torn by beasts in the field (Ex. 22:31). If an Israelite ate the flesh of any clean animal, which had died of itself (this was not permissible—Deut. 14:21), that *person* was “unclean” until evening (Lev. 11:40). It means he was *defiled*. (This was the sort of defiling which does not come about by eating with unwashed hands!)

No priest was permitted to defile himself by eating animals that died naturally or were torn by beasts (Lev. 22:7).

In Romans 14:14, Paul was teaching that the “Jewish” concept of meats sometimes being *common* or defiled, was not

an intrinsic property of the meat itself, but was a matter of perception and conscience.

As well as being vital to all who were in Rome (Rom. 1:7), this teaching was also important to the Church at Corinth. There, some of the newly converted Gentiles were content to eat clean meat that may have been offered to idols. Others, not fully understanding that an idol is nothing (I Cor. 8:4), would *defile their own conscience*, if they were to eat such meat, because they *perceived* it to be defiled.

Both examples strongly emphasize the importance of not violating one’s own conscience, and not causing a brother to stumble by inconsiderate behavior.

#### What About I Timothy 4:4-5?

There is one final scripture about meats that is commonly misunderstood. I Timothy 4:4-5 says, “For *every creature is good*, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.” Does this verse authorize eating skunks, leeches, maggots, tapeworms and every other imaginable animal, insect or parasite? Many people think so—because they do not continue reading past the first phrase!

Consider! If this were the literal meaning of the verse, it would mean that *people* are also good to eat.

Every creature of God *is* good—“*very good*”—according to Genesis 1:31. That includes *every* kind of vermin, parasite and poisonous creature that exists. Remember, all creatures *are* wonderful in their own way when used for their proper, intended use! But the Creator Himself calls some of His creatures *abominable* and *detestable*, when misused as food for humans. To understand this verse, we must read the previous verses more carefully. Context is the key to correct understanding.

In I Timothy 4:1-3, Paul speaks about a prophesied end-time defection from truth, when some true Christians would abandon correct teachings to follow “doctrines of demons.” Some would teach *vegetarianism*, because he warned that these teachings would include celibacy and abstinence from “meats.” (Demons understand that meat contains certain proteins vital for the proper

development of the brain. They know that mental weakness invites their influence.) What kinds of meats would be forbidden? In verse 3, Paul explains, those “which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.” Note the two key phrases “*which God created to be received*” and “*by those who believe and know the truth.*”

What is “the truth”? John wrote, “Your Word is truth” (John 17:17). People who know what their Bible teaches, will *know* the *truth* about what kinds of animals God says that He *has* “created to be received”—as distinct from what He has *not* created to be received! In other words, they will know what the Word of God *sanctifies* (this word means *sets apart, distinguishes by separation*) as good for food (I Tim. 4:5)—and what it does *not* *sanctify*. They know what meat God expressly forbids and calls unclean. But false teachers would attempt to forbid clean meat as well as unclean meat!

#### Would God “Sanctify” Unclean Meat?

Recall the last two words of verse 5, “*and prayer.*” Paul shows that food, already sanctified by the Word of God and received by believers *with thanksgiving*, is to be further sanctified *by prayer*. This occurs when we follow Christ’s example of giving thanks for the food we eat—asking God to bless it—set it apart—make it holy—since it is about to be used for a holy purpose.

The Creator has specially designed certain creatures to be “very good” for the daily nourishment and upbuilding of the body. God refers to our bodies as the temple of the Holy Spirit. Paul wrote the Corinthians, “which temple we are, if God’s spirit dwells within us” (I Cor. 3:16, 17; 6:19).

We are not to defile that temple by polluting it with anything not sanctified by the Word of God.

#### Is Avoiding Unclean Meats Necessary For Salvation?

When faced with the *plain truth* of Scripture, some people are unwilling to “live by every word of God,” and choose to regard certain doctrines as “minor”—“not essential for salvation.” They decide

for themselves which of God's truths are important!

So the question arises: *Is avoiding unclean meats necessary for salvation?* The answer to this question is the answer to the next one: *Is OBEDIENCE TO GOD necessary for salvation?*

Mankind has rejected God's way of life. Romans 8:7 states that the carnal (natural) mind is not subject to His Law. Those who have submitted to God *obey* Him! Christ said that there are many who

say, "Lord, Lord" to Him but *do not* the things that He says (Luke 6:46; Matt. 7:21). That is serious. Are you determined to always do what God says?

Jesus said of His apostles, "He that receives *you* receives Me, and he that receives Me receives Him who sent Me" (Matt. 10:40; John 13:20).

Herbert W. Armstrong taught the truth about the doctrine of clean and unclean meats. In his article *Is All Animal Flesh Good Food?*, Mr.

Armstrong concluded with the following instruction:

**"It may not be spiritual sin to eat biblically unclean foods. Yet, if one deliberately does it out of lust of appetite, that breaks the tenth command and becomes sin. But in all events wrong food injures the body, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit. It defiles the BODY if not the *man*, and if we continue to defile our bodies God will destroy us (I Cor. 3:17)."** □

## General List of Clean and Unclean Creatures

<p><b>Clean Birds:</b> All Song Birds, Chicken, Dove, Duck, Geese, Grouse, Partridge, Pheasant, Pigeon, Quail and Turkey</p>	<p><b>Unclean Birds:</b> Aquatic/Wading Birds, Buzzard, Carrion, Condor, Coot, Cormorant, Crow, Eagle, Falcon, Flamingo, Hawk, Heron, Hoopoe, Kite, Magpie, Ostrich, Owl, Swan, Parrots, Pelican, Raven, Roadrunner, Seagull, Vulture, Woodpecker</p>
<p><b>Clean Fish:</b> Albacore, Alewives, Anchovies, Black Drum, Bluebacks, Bluebill Sunfish, Bluefish, Blue Runner, Bonitos, Boston Bluefish, Bowfin, Buffalo fish, Butterfish, Carp, Chub, Cod, Common Sucker, Crappies, Crevalle, Flounder, Fresh Water Mullet, Frost Fish, Grouper, Grunt, Gulf Pike, Haddock, Hake, Halibut, Hardtail, Herring, Ice fish, Jack, Kingfish, Long Nose Sucker, Mackerel, Menhaden, Mullet, Muskeilunge, Northern Sucker, Orange Roughy, Pickerels, Pig Fish, Pike, Pilchard, Pollack, Pompano, Porgy, Red Drum, Red Horse, Red Snapper, Red Striped Sucker, Redfin, Redfish, Robalo, Salmon, Sardine, Scup, Sea Bass, Sergeant Fish, Shad, Sheepshead, Silver Hake, Silverside, Smelt, Snook, Striped Bass, Trout, Tuna, Weakfish, White Fish, White Sucker, Whiting and Yellow Perch</p>	<p><b>Unclean Sea Creatures:</b> Abalone, Bullhead, Catfish, Clam, Crab, Crayfish, Dolphin, Eel, Conch, Lobster, Manatee, Mussel, Oyster, Porpoise, Scallop, Seal, Shark, Shrimp, Squid, Sturgeon, Turbot, Turtle, Walrus, Whale</p>
<p><b>Clean Land Animals:</b> Antelope, Bison, Brahma, Buffalo, Caribou, Cattle, Deer, Eland, Elk, Gazelle, Giraffe, Goat, Ibex, Kudu, Moose, Musk Ox, Oryx, Ox, Pronghorn, Reindeer, Sheep, Water Buffalo, Wildebeest, Yak, Zebu</p>	<p><b>Unclean Land Animals:</b> Anteater, Armadillo, Aardvark, Bat, Bear, Beaver, Cat, Camel, Chipmunk, Coney, Coyote, Dog, Donkey, Elephant, Fox, Gopher, Ground Hog, Hare, Hedge Hog, Hippo, Horse, Hyena, Hyrax, Jackel, Koala, Kangaroo, Lemur, Lion, Lizard, Lynx, Marmoset, Mole, Mouse, Opossum, Panda, Peccary, Pig, Platypus, Porcupine, Prairie Dog, Primates, Rabbit, Raccoon, Rat, Rhinoceros, Skunk, Sloth, Snakes, Squirrel, Tiger, Warthog, Woodchuck, Wolf, Zebra</p>
<p><b>Clean Insects:</b> Cricket, Grasshopper and Katydid</p>	<p><b>Amphibians:</b> All unclean</p>

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