

Biblical Food Laws



Yahuah, in creating all the animals of the air, water and land of earth, knew the purposes of each creature and, in His wisdom, also knew which animals were fit to be eaten by His people. Some animals were created to be decomposers, filters or cleaners of the earth, and so therefore unclean and unfit for us to eat. These creatures could, and still can, make people sick or give them dangerous parasites.

Yahuah therefore provided us with a list of clean and unclean animals in His Torah, so that all those who believe in Him would be kept healthy and set apart to Him!

Leviticus 11 tells us all about the food restrictions that Yahuah gave to us:

And Yahuah spoke to Moshe and to Aharon, saying to them, “Speak to the children of Yashar’el, saying, ‘These are the living creatures which you do not eat among all the beasts that are on the earth: Whatever has a split hoof completely divided, chewing the cud, among the beasts, that you do eat. Only, these you do not eat among those that chew the cud, or those that have a split hoof: the camel, because it chews the cud but does not have a split hoof, it is unclean to you; and the rabbit, because it chews the cuds but does not have a split hoof, it is unclean to you; and the hair, because it chews the cud but does not have a split hoof, it is unclean to you; and the pig, though it has a split hoof, completely divided, yet does not chew the cud, it is unclean to you.

‘Their flesh you do not eat, and their carcasses you do not touch. They are unclean to you.

‘These you do eat of all that are in the waters: any one that has fins and scales in the waters, in the seas or in the rivers, that you do eat. But all that have not fins and scales in the seas and in the rivers, all that move in the waters or any living being which is in the waters, they are an abomination to you. They are an abomination to you – of their flesh you do not eat, and their carcasses you abominate. All that have not fins or scales in the waters are an abomination to you.

‘And these you do abominate among the birds, they are not eaten, they are an abomination: the eagle, and the vulture, and the black vulture, and the hawk, and the falcon after its kind, every raven after its kind, and the ostrich, and the nighthawk, and the seagull, and the hawk after its kind, and the little owl, and the fisher owl, and the great owl, and the white owl, and the pelican, and the carrion vulture, and the stork, the heron after its kind, and the hoopoe, and the bat.

‘All flying insects that creep on all fours is an abomination to you. Only these you do eat of every flying insect that creeps on all fours: those which have jointed legs above their feet with which to leap the earth. These of them you do eat: the arbeh-locust after its kind, and the solam-locust after its kind, and the hargol-locust after its kind, and the hagab-locust after its kind. But all other flying insects which have four feet are an abomination to you.

‘And by these you are made unclean, anyone touching the carcass of any of them is unclean until evening, and anyone picking up part of the carcass of any of them has to wash his garments, and shall be unclean until evening.

‘Every beast that has a split hoof not completely divided, or does not chew the cud, is unclean to you. Anyone who touches their carcass is unclean.

'And whatever goes on its paws, among all the creatures that go on all fours, those are unclean to you. Anyone who touches their carcass is unclean until evening, and he who picks up their carcass has to wash his garments, and shall be unclean until evening. They are unclean to you.

'And these are unclean to you among the creatures that creep on the earth: the mole, and the mouse, and the tortoise after its kind, and the gecko, and the land crocodile, and the sand reptile, and the sand lizard, and the chameleon. These are unclean to you among all that creep. Anyone who touches them when they are dead becomes unclean until evening.

'And whatever any of them in its dead state falls upon, becomes unclean, whether it is any wooden object or garment or skin or sack, any object in which work is done, it is put in water. And it shall be unclean until evening, then it shall be clean. Any earthen vessel into which any of them falls, whatever is in it becomes unclean, and you break it. Any of the food which might be eaten, on which water comes, becomes unclean, and any drink which might be drunk from it becomes unclean.

'And on whatever any of their carcass falls becomes unclean – an oven or cooking range – it is broken down. They are unclean, and are unclean to you. But a fountain or a well, a collection of water, is clean, but whatever touches their carcass is unclean. And when any of their carcass falls on any planting seeds which is to be sown, it is clean, but when any water is put on the seed and any part of any such carcass falls on it, it is unclean to you.

'And when any of the beasts which are yours for food dies, he who touches its carcass becomes unclean until evening. And he who eats of its carcass has to wash his garments, and shall be unclean until evening. And he who picks up its carcass has to wash his garments, and shall be unclean until evening.

'And every swarming creature – the one that swarms on the earth is an abomination, it is not eaten. Whatever crawls on its stomach, and whatever goes on all fours, and whatever has many feet among all swarming creatures – the ones swarming on the earth, these you do not eat, for they are an abomination. Do not make yourselves abominable with any swarming creature – the one swarming, and do not make yourselves unclean with them, lest you be defiled by them.

'For I am Yahuah your Elohim, and you shall set yourselves apart. And you shall be set apart. And do not defile yourselves with any swarming creature – the one creeping on the earth. For I am Yahuah who is bringing you up out of the land of Mitsrayim, to be your Elohim. And you shall be set apart, for I am set apart.

'This is the Torah of the beasts and the birds and every living being – the creeping creature in the waters, and of every being that swarms on the earth, to

make a distinction between the unclean and the clean, and between the living creature that is eaten and the living creature that is not eaten.”

Noah knew the Law of clean and unclean animals, way before the Torah was given at Sinai!

Noah was instructed to take animals onto the ark in pairs, but there is something we aren't always told in Sunday school – there were more pairs of each clean animals than there were pairs of unclean animals!

“Of all the clean beasts take with you seven pairs, a male and his female; and of the beasts that are unclean two, a male and his female,” Genesis 7:2

Noah needed to save more of the unclean animals, so that there would be plenty of clean, safe meat for the surviving people to consume, as well as enough clean animals for sacrificial purposes!

This shows us that the Food Law existed even from the very beginning, just like the rest of the Torah!

Washing of hands?

And the Pharisees and some of the scribes assembled to Him, having come from Yerushalayim. And seeing some of His taught ones eat bread with defiled, that is, with unwashed hands, they found fault. For the Pharisees, and all the Yehudim, do not eat unless they wash their hands thoroughly, holding fast the tradition of the elders, and coming from the market place, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other traditions which they have received and hold fast – the washing of cups and utensils and copper vessels and couches.

Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, “Why do Your taught ones not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?”

And He answering, said to them, “Well did Yeshayahu (Isaiah) prophesy concerning you hypocrites, as it has been written, ‘This people respect Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain do they worship Me, teaching as teaching the commands of men. Forsaking the command of Elohim, you hold fast the tradition of men.’”

And He said to them, “Well do you set aside the command of Elohim, in order to guard your tradition. For Moshe said, ‘Respect your father and you mother,’ and, ‘He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.’ But you say, ‘If a man says to his father or mother, “Whatever profit you might have received from me is a gift, you no longer let him do any matter at all for his father or his mother, nullifying the Word of Elohim through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such traditions you do.”

And calling the crowd to Him, He said to them, "Hear Me, everyone, and understand: There is no matter that enters a man from outside which is able to defile him, but that what comes out of him that defiles the man. If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!" Mark 7:1-16

This passage is often given when you bring up unclean animals! Most likely because some Bible translations ACTUALLY add a phrase in there that says, "Therefore Jesus declared all meat clean." It is a sin to add or take away from the Word of Yahuah, and that phrase is a bold-faced lie!

Yahusha isn't talking about any kind of meat here, his disciples were only eating bread! He was talking about the Pharisees' question of eating with unwashed hands, which was one of their manmade doctrines and not a Law of Yahuah. He made sure they understood that the unwashed hands of his disciples would not make them unclean, but rather that the deceitful words of the Pharisees would make them unclean.

The herd of swine.

Here we can get glimpse of what Yahusha thought about using pigs as food.

And they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes. And when He came out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, who had his dwelling among the tombs. And no one was able to bind him, not even with chains, because he has often been bound with shackles and chains but the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces, and no one was able to tame him. And continually, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones. And seeing Yahusha from a distance, he ran and bowed down to Him, and having called out with a loud voice, said, What have I to do with You, Yahusha, Son of the Most High El? Swear to Elohim not to torture me."

For He had said to him, "Come out of the man, unclean spirit!"

And He was asking him, "What is your name?"

And he answered, saying, "My name is Legion, because we are many."

And he begged Him very much that He would not send them out of the country. Now a great herd of pigs was there, feeding near the mountains. And all the demons begged Him, saying, "Send us to the pigs, so that we enter into them."

And He gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out and entered into the pigs – they were about two thousand – and the herd rushed down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea. Mark 5:1-13

This passage really stands out for me! I believe that Yahusha was very conscious of humans and their needs, and would not have needlessly wasted a large herd of food animals. Being who He is, He allowed the demons to flee into the pigs, knowing that they were unfit to be eaten by people in any case. He would certainly not have allowed the spirits into a herd of cattle or sheep! He made the conscious decision to allow them to enter into the unclean swine because he knew they were already an abominable creature to Yahuah.

Peter's vision?

The majority Christian churches and pastors tell us that Peter's vision in Acts is proof that we may eat pork and other animals that were declared unclean in the Old Testament. Let's have a look at that passage now.

And on the next day, as they were on their way and approaching the city, Kepha went up on the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour. And he became hungry and wished to eat. But while they were preparing, he fell into a trance, and he saw the heaven opened and a certain vessel like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth, in which were all kinds of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping creatures, and the birds of the heaven.

And a voice came to him, "Rise up, Kepha, slay and eat."

But Kepha said, "Not at all, Master! Because I have never eaten whatever is common or unclean."

And a voice came to him again the second time, "What Elohim has cleansed you do not consider common."

And this took place three times, and the vessel was taken back to the heaven.
Acts 10:9-16

But I won't leave it there. It is important to consider the context of the passage. A little later in the same chapter, we get the answer to the riddle.

Kepha, or Peter, wondered what the vision meant. But he eventually realized that the vision was to show that the tradition of the Yehudim, or Jews, that prohibited them from spending time with people of other races, based on race alone, was unrighteous. Peter understood that he shouldn't distance himself from Cornelius, who shares his beliefs.

And he said to them, "You know that a Yehudi man is not allowed to associate with, or go to one of another race. But Elohim has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean." Acts 10:28

Yahuah knew to show Peter that Cornelius, in his faith and actions, was set apart just as Peter was, so that Peter would feel free to spend time with him, rather than worrying about Cornelius being a gentile.

This vision had nothing to do with “making all animals clean”, but rather symbolized people. Peter understood that once Yahuah had made a person clean and set apart to Him, he, Peter, could not consider them unclean any longer.

Yahusha’s death?

Many believers, pastors and other church leaders tell us that by dying for our sins, Yahusha also made all animals clean to be eaten. This is clearly not the case, as we can clearly see in Peter’s original response to the vision in the previous passage: “Not at all, Master! Because I have never eaten whatever is common or unclean.”

If Yahusha’s death truly had suddenly made all animals fit for human consumption, why would Peter and his companions not have jumped at the chance to eat some bacon? The obvious answer is that Peter knew that those animals were still unclean for him!

Next, we will look at some more proof that the unclean foods mentioned in Scripture were never “suddenly made clean” by Yahusha’s sacrifice, and that they remain unclean for us, even now!

The science behind unclean foods:

As far as I know, there was no “scientific method” in Old Testament times, or even in the time when Yahusha walked the earth as a man. In those days, the people had to trust in the wisdom of Scripture to not eat what they were told were unclean animals.

Now, while I believe that we should have the same level of trust in Scripture, I also know that we were raised differently and we sometimes need a more “concrete” reason not to eat certain foods. When I started out on this journey to keep Torah, I needed some extra information about why I shouldn’t eat bacon and shrimp cocktail. What I discovered after some research sealed the deal! Let’s take a look at some science:

Shellfish, specifically bivalve mollusks like clams and oysters, are filter feeders, which means that they filter the water around them. They often collect toxins from the water from sources such as toxic algae or manmade chemicals or pollutants dumped into the water. These toxic shellfish have been known to cause what is called “shellfish poisoning”, which can be amnesic, diarrheal, neurotoxic or paralytic in nature.

Amnesic shellfish poisoning is caused by a marine biotoxin called domoic acid, which can cause short-term memory loss, brain damage and even death in humans and mammals. Diarrhetic shellfish poisoning, as the name implies, causes severe diarrhea, abdominal pain and often nausea and vomiting because of the presence of okadaic acid in the shellfish. Neurotoxic shellfish poisoning is caused by brevetoxins in shellfish and can cause neurologic and gastrointestinal issues such as numbness, pain in the body, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. Paralytic shellfish poisoning is primarily caused by saxitoxin, found in filter feeders and pufferfish, and can cause paralysis in those who consume it, including respiratory paralysis!

Shrimp, lobsters, crabs and crayfish are quite literally the cleaners and decomposers of the oceans and fresh water systems of the earth. They eat “whatever is lying around”, plants, algae, dead animals and even pollution. Their bodies retain any and all toxins that they pick up, and are therefore not fit for human consumption. They have also been known to contain the above mentioned toxins!

And lastly, swine. Pork is sadly the most widely consumed meat in the world. And after studying Scripture and even secular sources, I can't help but think that hasatan has purposefully done this to cause people all over the world to be unhealthy and Biblically unclean! Pork is idolized by so many people! I have personally been shocked a few times by friends and family members saying things like, “Even if Jesus himself comes down and tells me not to eat bacon, I'll still eat it!” If that isn't idolatry I don't know what is. Unclean eating that has been normalized by the church is, I feel, part of the Great Deception of our age.

Pigs are scavengers and used as “waste eliminators” on farms, and will eat almost anything that they come across, this includes, snakes, insects, rotting food scraps, feces and dead carcasses. They have even been known to eat people!

Pigs do not chew the cud, and therefore digest their food relatively quickly compared to clean animals like cows and sheep. They retain any toxins that they eat in their flesh and fat. They also can't sweat, and therefore can't detoxify their bodies well at all.

Pigs are carriers of harmful pathogens such as tapeworms and other worms, as well as viruses and bacteria! One of the most harmful parasites that they carry are trichinella worms, which can cause severe illness throughout the body, and are extremely difficult to kill, even as high temperatures, making even well-cooked pork a health risk.

Pork offal, especially the liver, is a transmitter of Hepatitis E, that can cause symptoms such as fever, jaundice, vomiting, joint and stomach pain and even sometimes liver failure and death, amongst other serious conditions.

Multiple sclerosis, an autoimmune condition of the nervous system, has also been tied to pork consumption, especially in countries such as Germany and Denmark.

Cirrhosis of the liver and liver cancer are also widespread in countries with high pork consumption, in which studies show that beef consumption is liver-neutral or even protects the liver!

These are just a few examples of specific unclean creatures and the illnesses they can cause. As you can see, most, if not all, of the unclean animals listed in Leviticus 11 are scavengers, decomposers, bottom- or filter-feeders. They are the garbage disposal systems of the earth, and are therefore not safe for us to eat. I'm sure that an individual study of each animal listed will bring up similar results – that we really shouldn't be eating them despite what we are told by society and church.

I shudder to think that I used to casually eat all of these non-foods without a second thought! There is no way I will question Yahuah's judgement on what I should eat ever again! There are so many reasons to trust the Food Laws to maintain your health and wellbeing.

I will close off with two, rather impactful, passages about the consequences of eating clean.

“I have held out My hands all day long to a stubborn people, who walk in a way that is not good, after their own thoughts; the people who provoke Me continually to My face, who slaughter in gardens, and burn incense on slaughter-places of brick; who sit among the burial-sites, and spend the night in secret places, who eat flesh of pigs, and the broth of unclean meat is in their pots, who say, ‘Keep to yourself, do not come near me, for I am set apart to you!’ These are smoke in My nostrils, a fire that burns all day. See, it is written before Me: I am not silent, but shall replay, and I shall repay into their bosom, your crookednesses and the crookednesses of your fathers together,” said Yahuah, “Who burned incense on the mountains and reproached Me on the hills. And I shall measure their former work into their bosom.” Isaiah 65:2-4

This strikes fear into me! Yahuah doesn't take sin and idolatry lightly! He is a jealous El, and this world's idolatry of their bacon and bangers and crawfish will not go unpunished.

“For by fire and by His sword Yahuah shall judge all flesh, and the slain of Yahuah shall be many – those who set themselves apart and cleanse themselves

at the gardens after 'one' in the midst, eating flesh of pigs and the abomination and the mouse, are snatched away, together," declares Yahuah. "And I, because of their works and their imaginations, am coming to gather all nations and tongues. And they shall come and see My esteem." Isaiah 66:16-18

This is an "end times" prophecy, where those who eat unclean foods are snatched away, and will be unable to inherit the earth with Yahuah's children.

With this reminder, it is clear to see that we should set ourselves apart in what we eat, to remain pure for our Father's sake, and to remain healthy while we live on this earth!

Yahuah is all knowing, and laid down His Laws to keep us safe, even from ourselves. Every instruction in the Torah is there for a reason, including the clean-eating instructions! Not to keep us bound under some useless system of laws, or to keep us away from tasty delicacies, but for our own protection and health. Modern science, even with its downfalls, very often proves the validity of the Bible in our lives, even so many millennia after it was written down for man.

In the case of what meat we should and shouldn't eat, I say that we should trust the very Creator of all the animals to know what is best for us, rather than Chef Gordon Ramsey, the restaurant industry, or even all the church leaders who tell us that these laws have been "nailed to the cross."

References:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shellfish_poisoning

https://www.emedicinehealth.com/wilderness_shellfish_poisoning_gastrointestinal/article_em.htm

<https://draxe.com/nutrition/why-you-should-avoid-pork/>

<https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/is-pork-bad>

All Bible verses taken from The Scriptures 2009 by The Institute for Scripture Research.