

# TO EAT OR NOT TO EAT

Are Christians Bound by  
Biblical Dietary Law?

**COREY H.D. BECKLES**

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Are Christians Bound by Biblical Dietary  
Laws?

COREY H.D. BECKLES

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the New Living Translation of the Bible. KJV and NIV refer to the King James Version and the New International Version respectively.

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# Chapter 1

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## God's Dietary Plans for His Creation

God has a dietary plan for His creation. The Bible records these dietary plans and in some instances it records God's purpose behind these plans. All of these plans were instituted after a specific event and for specific people. Those specific events were:

- The creation of all living things (Creation);
- The flood that destroyed all living things (Noah's Flood);
- The exodus of Israel from Egypt (The Exodus)

God had a dietary plan for human beings after Creation. The Bible records that in the beginning God told the first man and woman that there was only one kind of created thing that He provided for their food:

*Then God said, "Look! I have given you every SEED-BEARING PLANT throughout the earth and all the FRUIT TREES for your food. (Gen.1:29)*

God modified His dietary plan for human beings after Noah's flood. After the flood God told Noah:

*All the animals of the earth, all the birds of the sky, all the small animals that scurry along the ground, and all the fish in the sea will look on you with fear and terror. I have placed them in your power. I have GIVEN THEM TO YOU FOR FOOD, just as I have given you grain and vegetables. (Gen.9:2-3)*

After the flood God decided to give ALL THE ANIMALS OF THE EARTH, ALL THE BIRDS IN THE SKY, ALL THE SMALL ANIMALS THAT SCURRY ALONG THE GROUND AND ALL THE FISH IN SEA to human beings for food. In other words, it was the will of God for

human beings to eat every creature. However, many years after the flood God spoke to a man whose name was Abram and gave him a great promise:

*...Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: AND I WILL MAKE OF THEE A GREAT NATION... (Gen.12:1-2 KJV)*

God promised to use Abram (God later changed his name to Abraham) to MAKE A GREAT NATION. Abraham had a son called Isaac and Isaac had a son whose name was Jacob. Jacob had twelve sons. God changed Jacob's name to Israel. It was through the twelve sons of Israel that God made a great nation. However, before Israel became a great nation it was a group of people called the children of Israel and they were slaves in Egypt. God then sent a man named Moses to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt and into the land He had promised Abraham (the Promised Land)[4].

While the children of Israel were travelling towards the Promised Land, God gave them specific commandments, statutes and laws that they had to keep in order to receive every good thing that God had promised to give them[5]. Dietary laws were among those things that they had to keep [6]. While the other nations were enjoying the meat of all kinds of animals, the children of Israel were restricted to eating only the meat of clean animals. God identified those animals which were clean and those which were unclean. Therefore, God had a dietary plan for the children of Israel.

Without God, the children of Israel would not have existed. God created the nation of Israel and separated Israel from the other nations of the world. He gave Israel a dietary plan that separated it from the other nations. This dietary plan separated "all the animals of the earth, all the birds of the sky, all the small animals that scurry along the ground, and all the fish in the sea" into clean and unclean. The children of Israel could not eat any animal, bird or fish which God said was unclean. The other nations were able to eat any animal they desired but the children of Israel

were restricted by the dietary laws given to them. I will now examine the dietary restrictions God placed on His creation.

# Chapter 2

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## In the Beginning...Thou Shalt eat Plants!

In the beginning God restricted human beings from eating animals. The Bible records that in the beginning God told the first man and woman that there was only one kind of created thing that He provided for their food:

*Then God said, "Look! I have given you every SEED-BEARING PLANT throughout the earth and all the FRUIT TREES for your food (Gen.1:29)*

In the beginning the first man and woman ate "every seed-bearing plant" and "all the fruit trees". They ate nothing else but plants and fruits. God also said that he provided plants and fruits for the other living creatures also:

*And I have given every green plant as food for all the wild animals, the birds in the sky, and the small animals that scurry along the ground—everything that has life." (Gen.1:30)*

God gave human beings "dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth"[7] but mankind could only eat green plants for food. In the beginning God expressly chose green plants to be the food for human beings and for all the animals and birds. This meant that human beings were prohibited from eating animals for food. Therefore, one could say that in the beginning of creation it was God's will for human beings to be strict vegetarians.

## In the Garden of Eden...Everything except...

Before I move on to God's dietary plan after the flood it is interesting to note that God had a dietary plan for Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. God planted the Garden in an area called Eden and:

*...out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. (Gen.2:9 KJV)*

The Garden of Eden was full of trees which were “pleasant to the sight and good for food” but Adam and Eve were not allowed to eat from every tree. God placed a dietary restriction on them. God told Adam:

*...Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, THOU SHALT NOT EAT OF IT: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. (Gen.2:16 KJV)*

Adam and Eve were free to eat of every tree in the Garden of Eden except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God modified his dietary plan for Adam and Eve because the tree of the knowledge of good and evil would cause them to die. Unfortunately, Adam and Eve still ate of the tree, brought God’s judgment upon themselves and brought death into this world.

# Chapter 3

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## Noah's Flood...A New Dietary Beginning

After Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit and were thrown out of the Garden of Eden, I believe mankind continued to follow the dietary plan God established in the beginning. However, a time came when the earth was filled with unrighteousness and God decided to do something about it:

*And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. 7And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. (Gen.6:5-7 KJV)*

God decided to destroy every living creature on the earth because of the wickedness of mankind. However, there was one man that pleased God and God decided to save him and his family from destruction. That man was Noah. God told Noah:

*... I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife and your sons' wives with you. You are to bring into the ark two of all living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you. Two of every kind of bird, of every kind of animal and of every kind of creature that moves along the ground will come to you to be kept alive.12 You are to take EVERY KIND OF FOOD THAT IS TO BE EATEN and store it away as food for you and for them.” (Gen.6:18-21 NIV)*

Noah built the ark and brought the animals into the ark as God commanded Him. Noah also brought “every kind of food that is to be eaten”. We are not told what kind of food was brought

but I believe that this food consisted of seed-bearing plants and fruits as God had prescribed in the beginning of creation. Noah, his family and the animals spent more than 150 days inside the ark. That was a great amount of food! After the flood waters subsided, Noah came out of the ark with his family and all the animals. The only human beings on the entire earth were Noah and his family (eight persons in all). In the beginning God gave instructions to Adam and Eve, the first man and woman. After the flood, God gave instructions to Noah and his family:

*...Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth... EVERY MOVING THING THAT LIVETH SHALL BE MEAT FOR YOU; even as the green herb have I given you all things. (Gen.9:1,3 KJV)*

The New Living Translation states:

*...Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth. All the animals of the earth, all the birds of the sky, all the small animals that scurry along the ground, and all the fish in the sea will look on you with fear and terror. I have placed them in your power. I have given them to you for food, just as I have given you grain and vegetables. (Gen.9:1-3)*

After the flood, God instituted a new dietary plan:

### **GREEN PLANTS AND EVERY LIVING THING THAT MOVES**

The only restriction that God placed upon human beings after the flood was that they should not to eat any flesh with the blood still in it. God told Noah and his family:

*But you must never eat any meat that still has the LIFEBLOOD in it. (Gen.9:4 NLT)*

Noah's flood ushered in a new way of living. It was a new dietary beginning for human beings on the earth.

# Chapter 4

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## The Exodus: A New Dietary Plan for Israel

God promised to use Abram to make “a great nation” if Abram obeyed Him. Abram obeyed the voice of God and moved towards the land that God would show him. Later, God changed Abram’s name to Abraham because he would be “the father of many nations”[8]. Abraham indeed was the father of many nations but there is only one “great nation” that God made through Abraham. That nation is Israel. God made a covenant with Abraham and promised to give him the land of Canaan as an everlasting possession[9]. God then confirmed that covenant with Abraham’s son Isaac[10]. Isaac had two sons, Jacob and Esau. God confirmed the covenant with Jacob and changed Jacob’s name to Israel[11]. Jacob’s twelve sons then became the children of Israel. Many years passed and the children of Israel began to live in Egypt. However, they began to multiply and Pharaoh, the king of Egypt felt threatened by them. This caused the Egyptians to:

*...[make] the Israelites their slaves. They appointed brutal slave drivers over them, hoping to wear them down with crushing labor. They forced them to build the cities of Pithom and Rameses as supply centers for the king. But the more the Egyptians oppressed them, the more the Israelites multiplied and spread, and the more alarmed the Egyptians became. 13 So the Egyptians worked the people of Israel without mercy. They made their lives bitter, forcing them to mix mortar and make bricks and do all the work in the fields. They were ruthless in all their demands. (Exodus 1:11-14)*

The children of Israel were slaves in Egypt for more than 400 years but God remembered the promise of deliverance he made to Abraham. God sent a man called Moses to go to Pharaoh and request that he allow the children of Israel to leave Egypt. After Egypt experienced ten disastrous

plagues, Pharaoh finally decided to let the children of Israel go[12]. The last plague was the death of every firstborn male in Egypt. However, before God caused that last plague Moses told Pharaoh:

*“This is what the Lord says: At midnight tonight I will pass through the heart of Egypt. All the firstborn sons will die in every family in Egypt, from the oldest son of Pharaoh, who sits on his throne, to the oldest son of his lowliest servant girl who grinds the flour. Even the firstborn of all the livestock will die. Then a loud wail will rise throughout the land of Egypt, a wail like no one has heard before or will ever hear again. But among the Israelites it will be so peaceful that not even a dog will bark. Then you will know that the Lord makes a distinction between the Egyptians and the Israelites. (Exodus 11:4-7)*

The last sentence in verse 7 is extremely relevant to answering the question: Are Christians Bound by Biblical Dietary Laws? In that sentence it is revealed that the LORD would make ‘a distinction between the Egyptians and the Israelites’ with regard to the last plague. The Egyptians would suffer the judgment of that plague but Israel would be safe. In the same way God separated the children of Israel from the Egyptians in judgment God separated the children of Israel from all the other nations of the world with regard to different aspects of life. God separated Israel from the other nations of the world with regard to their calendar:

*While the Israelites were still in the land of Egypt, the Lord gave the following instructions to Moses and Aaron: “From now on, this month will be the first month of the year for you. (Exodus 12:1-2)*

God separated Israel from the other nations of the world with regard to the feasts they would celebrate every year. God told Moses to tell the children of Israel:

*...on the tenth day of this month each family must choose a lamb or a young goat for a sacrifice, one animal for each household...Take special care of this chosen animal until*

*the evening of the fourteenth day of this first month. Then the whole assembly of the community of Israel must slaughter their lamb or young goat at twilight...The whole animal—including the head, legs, and internal organs—must be roasted over a fire. Do not leave any of it until the next morning. Burn whatever is not eaten before morning... Eat the meal with urgency, for this is the Lord's Passover. ...This is a day to remember. Each year, from generation to generation, you must celebrate it as a special festival to the Lord. This is a law for all time... ...Celebrate this Festival of Unleavened Bread, for it will remind you that I brought your forces out of the land of Egypt on this very day. This festival will be a permanent law for you; celebrate this day from generation to generation. (Exodus 12:3-17)*

God also separated Israel from the other nations of the world with regard to the kind of animals they should eat:

*You have been set apart as holy to the Lord your God, and he has chosen you from all the nations of the earth to be his own special treasure. ...These are the animals you may eat: the ox, the sheep, the goat, the deer, the gazelle, the roe deer, the wild goat, the addax, the antelope, and the mountain sheep. You may eat any animal that has completely split hooves and chews the cud, but if the animal doesn't have both, it may not be eaten. So you may not eat the camel, the hare, or the hyrax. They chew the cud but do not have split hooves, so they are ceremonially unclean for you. And you may not eat the pig. It has split hooves but does not chew the cud, so it is ceremonially unclean for you. You may not eat the meat of these animals or even touch their carcasses. (Deut.14:2-8)*

God chose Israel to be His “own special treasure”. The King James Translation refers to Israel being “a peculiar people”[13]. God chose Israel to be distinct from any other nation in the world. As a result God gave Israel specific laws concerning their daily activities. These laws separated

Israel from other nations. The laws concerning the eating of animals separated Israel from other nations.

# Chapter 5

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## Unclean to Israel; Clean to the other Nations

When God gave the laws concerning the eating of animals to Israel there were specific words He used to inform them that they should not eat certain animals. In the Book of Leviticus it is recorded:

*Of all the land animals, these are the ones you may use for food. You may eat any animal that has completely split hooves and chews the cud. You may not, however, eat the following animals that have split hooves or that chew the cud, but not both. The camel chews the cud but does not have split hooves, so IT IS CEREMONIALLY UNCLEAN FOR YOU. The hyrax chews the cud but does not have split hooves, so IT IS UNCLEAN. The hare chews the cud but does not have split hooves, so IT IS UNCLEAN. The pig has evenly split hooves but does not chew the cud, so IT IS UNCLEAN. You may not eat the meat of these animals or even touch their carcasses. THEY ARE CEREMONIALLY UNCLEAN FOR YOU. Of all the marine animals...you must never eat animals from the sea or from rivers that do not have both fins and scales. THEY ARE DETESTABLE TO YOU.*

*This applies both to little creatures that live in shallow water and to all creatures that live in deep water. THEY WILL ALWAYS BE DETESTABLE TO YOU...Any marine animal that does not have both fins and scales IS DETESTABLE TO YOU. These are the birds that ARE DETESTABLE TO YOU. You must never eat them: the griffon vulture, the bearded vulture, the black vulture, the kite, falcons of all kinds... You must not eat winged insects that walk along the ground; THEY ARE DETESTABLE TO YOU. You may, however, eat winged insects that walk along the ground and have jointed legs so they can jump. The insects you are permitted to eat include all kinds of locusts, bald*

*locusts, crickets, and grasshoppers. All other winged insects that walk along the ground ARE DETESTABLE TO YOU. (Lev.11: 2-23)*

The Book of Deuteronomy repeats the Laws that were recorded in Leviticus 11:

*“You may eat any animal that has completely split hooves and chews the cud, but if the animal doesn’t have both, it may not be eaten. So you may not eat the camel, the hare, or the hyrax. They chew the cud but do not have split hooves, so THEY ARE CEREMONIALLY UNCLEAN FOR YOU. And you may not eat the pig. It has split hooves but does not chew the cud, so IT IS CEREMONIALLY UNCLEAN FOR YOU. You may not eat the meat of these animals or even touch their carcasses. Of all the marine animals, you may eat whatever has both fins and scales. You may not, however, eat marine animals that do not have both fins and scales. THEY ARE CEREMONIALLY UNCLEAN FOR YOU. These are the birds you may not eat: the griffon vulture, the bearded vulture, the black vulture, the kite, the falcon, buzzards of all kinds... All winged insects that walk along the ground are CEREMONIALLY UNCLEAN FOR YOU and may not be eaten. (Deut.14:6-8, 9-10, 12-13, 19)*

God told Moses to tell the children of Israel that they could not eat every animal. There were several animals which God said were “ceremonially unclean for you [Israel]” and “detestable to you [Israel]”. In other words, there were certain animals, birds and fish that Israel could not eat. The other nations were able to eat those animals, birds and fish but to Israel they were unclean and detestable.

## Give it to the Foreigner and the Stranger

God separated Israel from the other nations of the world concerning the meats they could eat. God told Israel that certain meats were unclean to them but God never condemned the other nations for eating those “unclean” meats. This is seen clearly in the record of Deuteronomy:

*You must not eat anything that has died a natural death. You may give it to a foreigner living in your town, or you may sell it to a stranger. But do not eat it yourselves, for you are set apart as holy to the Lord your God. (Deut.14:21)*

God told Israel not to eat anything that has died a natural death. However, God also told them that they could give the dead animal to a “foreigner” or sell it to a “stranger”. In other words, those animals which had died a natural death were UNCLEAN to Israel but to those who were not of Israel (the foreigner and the stranger) those animals were CLEAN.

## Daniel in Babylon

The Book of Daniel records that Babylon, which was ruled by King Nebuchadnezzar at the time, besieged Jerusalem and took many of the young men who were from the King’s family or other noble families to Babylon to serve the King. These young men had to be “strong, healthy, and good-looking young men...well versed in every branch of learning...gifted with knowledge and good judgment, and are suited to serve in the royal palace”[14]. The King also assigned these young men a special diet:

*The king assigned them A DAILY RATION OF FOOD AND WINE FROM HIS OWN KITCHENS. They were to be trained for three years, and then they would enter the royal service. (Dan.1:5)*

Daniel was one of the young men chosen to serve the King of Babylon. Daniel had to eat the King’s food and wine. However: Daniel was determined not to DEFILE HIMSELF BY EATING THE FOOD AND WINE GIVEN TO THEM BY THE KING. He asked the chief of staff for permission not to eat these unacceptable foods. (Dan.1:8) The King of Babylon did not follow God’s dietary plan given to the children of Israel. Therefore, the King ate the animals that God told Israel were “ceremonially unclean” to them. Daniel was a child of Israel and he knew the laws concerning the eating of animals that were given to Israel by Moses. Daniel knew that if he

ate unclean animals then he would be defiled (made unholy) in the sight of God. Therefore, he did not want to defile himself (make himself unholy) by eating any unclean food. God separated the children of Israel from the other nations of the world by giving them a special dietary plan. The King's meat was UNCLEAN to Daniel and the other young men of Israel but it was CLEAN to the King and the Babylonians.

# Chapter 6

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## The Kingdom of God is Preached

After God gave the children of Israel laws, commandments, statutes and judgments, the children of Israel had to be constantly reminded of those laws, commandments, statutes and judgments so that they would know what God required of them and do it. The Book of Deuteronomy was Moses' reminder to the children of Israel of God's laws. Moses also admonished them to keep those laws because:

*“they are your life! By obeying them you will enjoy a long life in the land you will occupy when you cross the Jordan River.” (Deut. 32:47)*

God gave the children of Israel those laws because he wanted them to obtain possession of the Promised Land and also “enjoy a long life” in the Promised Land. God also reminded the children of Israel of those laws when they failed to keep them. God sent prophets to Israel regularly to preach to them warn them that they would lose the Promised Land if they continued to disobey the covenant He made with them after their Exodus from Egypt:

*When I led your ancestors out of Egypt, it was not burnt offerings and sacrifices I wanted from them. This is what I told them: ‘Obey me, and I will be your God, and you will be my people. Do everything as I say, and all will be well!’ ...From the day your ancestors left Egypt until now, I have continued to send my servants, the prophets—day in and day out. But my people have not listened to me or even tried to hear. They have been stubborn and sinful—even worse than their ancestors. (Jer.7:25-26)*

*The Lord gave another message to Jeremiah. He said, “Remind the people of Judah and Jerusalem about the terms of my covenant with them...For I said to your ancestors when*

*I brought them out of the iron-smelting furnace of Egypt, “If you obey me and do whatever I command you, then you will be my people, and I will be your God.” I said this so I could keep my promise to your ancestors to give you a land flowing with milk and honey—the land you live in today.’” (Jer.11:1-5)*

*Again and again the Lord has sent you his servants, the prophets, but you have not listened or even paid attention. Each time the message was this: ‘Turn from the evil road you are traveling and from the evil things you are doing. Only then will I let you live in this land that the Lord gave to you and your ancestors forever. (Jer.25:4-5)*

When Israel was under the rule of the Roman Empire, God sent another prophet to them. That prophet was John the Baptist. John the Baptist did not preach the same message that the prophets before him preached. John the Baptist preached a new message: In those days John the Baptist came to the Judean wilderness and began preaching. His message was, “Repent of your sins and turn to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near”. (Matt.3:1-2) The Jewish leaders continued to teach the people the Law of Moses. However, John the Baptist preached about the Kingdom of God. John the Baptist told the people what they needed to do to enter the Kingdom of God. Jesus Christ also preached the same message:

*From then on Jesus began to preach, “Repent of your sins and turn to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near.” (Matt.4:17)*

After Jesus died on the cross and was raised to life. He commanded His disciples to:

*...go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you... (Matt.28:19-20)*

On a previous occasion, Jesus told his disciples to only preach to the children of Israel (Jews) because God sent Him to the Jews. Now Jesus told them to ‘go and make disciples of all the

nations”. Therefore, God included all the nations of the world in His plan of salvation. This plan was different to what the Jews were familiar with. God separated the children of Israel from the other nations of the world. Therefore, the Jews always separated themselves from the peoples of other nations (the Gentiles). God made several promises to Jews. Now God gave the Gentiles the opportunity to benefit from those promises. When the Apostle Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost, he said:

*Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.*  
(Acts 2:38-39 KJV)

The Apostle Peter preached under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit revealed that the promise of the Holy Spirit is:

*“unto you [the Jews]” and “to your children [the children of the Jews]” and “to all that are afar off [those from other nations]”, even “as many as the Lord our God shall call [whoever the Lord God chooses to call]”. (Acts 2:39)*

God confirmed this when he called Cornelius (a Gentile) and told him to listen to a message from the Apostle Peter. When Peter preached the gospel of Jesus Christ to Cornelius and those with him, they all received the Holy Spirit in the same way that the Apostles received the Holy Spirit. The preaching of the Kingdom of God brought salvation to the Gentiles but God never required those Gentiles who became Christians to change their eating habits and follow the dietary plan of the Jews. This was confirmed by the teachings of Jesus and His Apostles.

# Chapter 7

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## The Kingdom of God is Not a Matter of What We Eat and Drink

The Apostle Paul was a Jew who was called by Jesus to teach and preach God's message of salvation to the Gentiles. Paul testified:

*For there is only one God and one Mediator who can reconcile God and humanity—the man Christ Jesus. He gave his life to purchase freedom for everyone. This is the message God gave to the world at just the right time. And I have been chosen as a preacher and apostle to teach the Gentiles this message about faith and truth. I'm not exaggerating—just telling the truth. (1 Tim.2:5-7)*

Paul wrote several letters to the Churches in the Roman Empire. In his letter to the Church in Rome, Paul said:

*I know and am convinced on the authority of the Lord Jesus that no food, in and of itself, is wrong to eat. But if someone believes it is wrong, then for that person it is wrong. And if another believer is distressed by what you eat, you are not acting in love if you eat it. Don't let your eating ruin someone for whom Christ died. Then you will not be criticized for doing something you believe is good. For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of what we eat or drink, but of living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. (Rom.14:14-17)*

The Kingdom of God is not a matter of what we eat or drink. The Kingdom of God is about “living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit”. Jesus did not come to change our physical diet. He came to change our spiritual diet. Jesus Christ died to save us from sin and to enable us by the Holy Spirit to live a life which pleases God. The Apostle Paul said that he

knows and that he is “convinced on the authority of the Lord Jesus that no food, in and of itself, is wrong to eat”. The Apostle Paul taught the same doctrine that Jesus taught concerning food:

*Then Jesus called to the crowd to come and hear. “Listen,” he said, “and try to understand. It’s not what goes into your mouth that defiles you; you are defiled by the words that come out of your mouth...Then Peter said to Jesus, “Explain to us the parable that says people aren’t defiled by what they eat.” “Don’t you understand yet?” Jesus asked. “Anything you eat passes through the stomach and then goes into the sewer. But the words you speak come from the heart—that’s what defiles you. For from the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, all sexual immorality, theft, lying, and slander. These are what defile you... (Matt.15:10-11, 15-20)*

God told the children of Israel that there were certain animals which would defile them if they were eaten. Did Jesus teach something totally different to God? No. Jesus preached and taught the people about the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is about the heart of man. Food cannot make the heart of man unclean. Sinful thoughts and sinful actions make the heart of man unclean. This is what Jesus and His Apostles taught and that is what Christians should teach and follow.

# Chapter 8

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## Christians are not Bound by Biblical Dietary Laws

We have looked at the dietary plans instituted by God in the Bible. Those dietary plans were given to human beings in the beginning of creation, to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, to all human beings after Noah's flood and to the children of Israel after their exodus from Egypt. God separated the children of Israel from the other nations of the world. God separated Israel from the other nations of the world with regard to their Calendar, the feasts they should celebrate and the kind of animals they could eat. There is nothing in the Bible from which we can come to the conclusion that God requires Christians to follow the dietary plan that He gave to the Jews. After the flood, God told Noah and his family that:

*“EVERY MOVING THING THAT LIVETH SHALL BE MEAT FOR YOU; even as the green herb have I given you all things. (Gen.9:1,3 KJV)*

The Apostle Paul told Timothy:

*Since everything God created is good, we should not reject any of it but receive it with thanks. For we know IT IS MADE ACCEPTABLE BY THE WORD OF GOD AND PRAYER. (1 Tim.4:4-5)*

God said that every creature He has made is “meat” for us. As Christians, we should give God thanks for the food we are about to eat. Whatever meat we choose to eat, we should give God thanks for it. If we do not believe that we should eat a certain kind of meat then we should not eat it. God wants us to eat with a clear conscience. If we do not eat with a clear conscience then our actions will be unacceptable in the sight of God:

*Don't tear apart the work of God over what you eat...You may believe there's nothing wrong with what you are doing, but keep it between yourself and God. Blessed are those who don't feel guilty for doing something they have decided is right. But if you have doubts about whether or not you should eat something, you are sinning if you go ahead and do it. For you are not following your convictions... (Rom.14:20-23)*

Christianity is a spiritual life. Christians must worship God “in spirit and in truth”. The truth about eating meats is that there is no meat which can make a human being unclean. The Gentiles were never made unclean by the meats they ate. They were made unclean by their sinful actions. The same is true for Christians. There is no food that can make the heart of a Christian unclean. However, “evil thoughts, murder, adultery, all sexual immorality, theft, lying, and slander” are some of the things that make our hearts unclean. The Apostle Paul, who was chosen to be a preacher and teacher to the Gentiles, never taught that those who eat certain meats will not inherit the Kingdom of God. This is what the Apostle Paul taught:

*Don't you realize that those who do wrong will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Don't fool yourselves. Those who indulge in sexual sin, or who worship idols, or commit adultery, or are male prostitutes, or practice homosexuality, or are thieves, or greedy people, or drunkards, or are abusive, or cheat people—none of these will inherit the Kingdom of God. (1 Cor.6:9-10)*

I choose to follow the teachings of Jesus and the Apostles. There are some who teach that there are certain meats which Christians should not eat and they try to condemn those who do not follow their teachings. God does not prevent Christians from following the dietary plan that He gave to Jews. Neither does God require that Christians follow that dietary plan. This is confirmed by Jesus and His Apostles. Therefore, Christians are not bound by biblical dietary laws.

# END NOTES

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[1] Giada Laurentis

[2] Genesis 12:1-3

[3] The twelve tribes of Israel are Reuben, Simeon, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Benjamin, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Ephraim and Manasseh

[4] Exodus 3:1-9

[5] Exodus 15:26; Exodus 20

[6] Leviticus 11; Deuteronomy 14

[7] Genesis 1:26

[8] Genesis 17:4-5

[9] Genesis 17:7-8

[10] Genesis 26:2-3

[11] Genesis 28:10-13; Genesis 32:28

[12] Genesis 12:31-33

[13] For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth.

[14] Daniel 1:1-4