

Does God Care What We Eat?

What is the mainstream stance?

"Many people ask can Christians eat pork and is it sinful to do so according to the Bible? The clear point blank answer to these questions are yes and no. Christians are free to eat anything. Pork, shrimp, seafood, meat, vegetables, anything. There is nothing that is restricting us and let me explain why. **In the Old Testament God gave dietary laws to Israel. Remember He didn't give them to everybody; He only gave them to the Israelites.**"—Website called "Bible Reasons"→**Ephesians 2:11-13** and **Romans 9:6-9**

"It's a beautiful Sunday afternoon, and after walking out of the morning church service feeling spiritually rejuvenated, you can think of nothing better than having your husband throw a few Italian pork sausages on the grill and watching the football game as a family. As you begin to make the suggestion to him, you recalled the pastor talking about how in the Old Testament, God forbid Israel from eating unclean foods. Just before you propose stopping at the market on the way home, you begin to wonder, can Christians eat pork? Upon the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God established a new covenant to be made with mankind, including redefining the old criteria that made a person unclean, such as eating pork. So, yes, Christians are allowed to eat pork, but there is more to this story. In this article, we will examine the Old Testament views about pork and why it's okay to eat it now under the new covenant."—Website called "Blogs by Christian Women"

"The truth is that according to the Bible, not only are Christians allowed to eat pork, but Christians should eat pork [including tasty bacon!], shellfish and other foods that the Bible labels unclean."—Website called "Faith Founded on Fact"

Now, what does the Bible say?

(1) The Bible makes a clear distinction between "clean" and "unclean" animals

- Leviticus 11:1-46

- "unclean" (tame-verb is 2930→19 times; adjective is 2931→13 times) defiled, unfit for human consumption
- "clean" (tahor-2889→3 times; from the verb taher-2891→1 time) pure, not mingled
- Animals on the earth: **MUST** (1) have divided hoof (2) chew the cud
- Water animals: **MUST** have fins and scales
- Birds: No carnivorous birds or birds of prey
- Insects: **MUST** have jointed legs above their feet
- V.35—"broken down" (natats-5422) broken, torn, pulled down; **Deuteronomy 12:3**—translated "destroy", same word used to talk about breaking down pagan altars→**Revelation 21:27, Isaiah 66:14-17**

v.4—Lo tochlu
v.8 and 11—Lo tochelu
v.13—Lo yeachlu
v.41—Lo yeachel
v.42—Lo tochlum
v.47—Lo teachel

- Other places "unclean" is used

- **Leviticus 7:19-21**→You can't be in a state of uncleanness or have the flesh of an unclean thing touch the peace (thanksgiving) offering.
- **Leviticus 20:22-26**→v.24—"separate" (badal-914) to separate; V.24-26—used 4 times, each time as a hiphil verb (causative action)
- **Deuteronomy 12:15, 22**→You may eat meat, **BUT** only the meat God says to. This stipulation is similar to **Genesis 9:3**.
- **Ezekiel 22:26**→The priests were supposed to be teaching the people the difference between the unclean and the clean. Defile—ללל ; Praise—הלל
- **Ezekiel 44:23-24**→In the kingdom, people will again be learning the difference between the clean and the unclean. "They shall teach" (yarah-3384) deals with shooting an arrow to hit a mark; priests are going to help people "hit the mark" in the kingdom.
- **Hosea 9:3**→They are eating unclean things, but as punishment for worshipping idols. In other words, if you are going to worship idols, go live among the idol worshippers. What did they eat? Unclean things.

- Contrast that to "clean"

- **Exodus 25:31**→"pure" means not mingled, free from contamination.
 - Compare that to clean animals. Clean animals don't have the diseases that unclean animals do, such as trichinosis, which comes from eating animals like bears and pigs.
 - What about mad cow disease? "[It] appears to be caused by the presence of abnormal prions from sheep with a similar disease affecting sheep called "scrapie." Cows acquire these prions from feed enriched with sheep meat and bone meal, the manufacturing process of which had been modified in the early 1980s."—scalarlight.com

- What is scrapie? "What is understood with greater certainty is that incidences of scrapie were recorded during the 18th and 19th centuries when the exportation of sheep from Spain coincided with an increased occurrence of scrapie. Furthermore, inbreeding sheep to improve wool quality, a practice encouraged by economic incentives, also increased the prevalence of scrapie."
- **Psalm 19:9**→Obedience (fear) to the LORD and His Law are not mingled with pagan idolatry—**Deuteronomy 12:28-32**

(2) Were clean animals mentioned before Exodus 20?

- **Genesis 1:29-30**→At creation, people and animals ate plants and not meat.
- **Genesis 2:15-17**→God put stipulations in place. You may of every tree EXCEPT...
- **Genesis 3:1-7**→What was the first sin? Man disobeyed God by eating that which God said not to eat.
- **Genesis 6:21**→People and animals were still eating only plants at this point.
- **Genesis 7:2, 8**→Here is the first mention of "clean" (tehorah, from tahor) and "not clean" (lo tehorah→not EVER clean)
- **Genesis 8:20**→Noah only offered clean animals.
- **Genesis 9:3**→"As the green herb"—You can eat everything EXCEPT...Refer back to **Deuteronomy 12:15**

(3) Doesn't the New Testament tell us that we can eat anything we want?

- Short answer: no. Misconceptions arise from the following misunderstandings→(1) Who is Israel? (2) Old Covenant=Law and New Covenant=grace and liberty (3) What is food?
- "I can eat anything because I prayed over it"→**1 Timothy 4:1-5**
 - V.3→"Foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth"—Which animals did God say could be received with thanksgiving?
- "Don't judge me for what I eat. All that stuff was nailed to the cross"→**Colossians 2:6-23**
 - V.8-9→If Yeshua is God, then His words will be according to Scripture. V.14→ "requirements" (dogma-1378) judgements—in other words, that which we were guilty of. Why was it contrary to us? The wages of sin are death. "Contrary" (hupenantios [hoop-en-an-tee'-os]-5227) an enemy or adversary—Was the Torah our enemy?
- "God told Peter to go eat a pig"→**Acts 10:1-18, 28**
 - "common" (koinos-2839) rabbinically unclean; "unclean" (akathartos-169) that which God called unclean; equivalent to tame. Akathartos, not koinos, is used in the Septuagint in Leviticus 11.
- "There's nothing unclean of itself"→**Romans 14:1-23**
 - The issue is about fasting vs. not fasting on Mondays and Thursdays. V. 5—This is not about picking a day to be a Sabbath. This is about choosing days in which to fast. Other than Yom Kippur, it makes no difference which days you fast. If you feel led by God to fast, then fast. V.14—"unclean" is the word koinos, which means common. V. 20—"All things are pure"—within the context, this is talking about even though any food (meat of veggies) is ok to eat, some people think it is evil to eat certain foods on certain days. All "food" is pure because God said it's pure in Leviticus 11, not because we say it's pure.
- "Jesus declared all foods clean"→**Mark 7:1-23** and **Matthew 15:15-20**
 - The topic is not food, it's about a ceremonial handwashing called netilat yadayim. Mark 7:2—"defiled" is koinos. **Mark 7:19**—Yeshua did not say everything is acceptable to eat, He said that once food passes through your system, it is cleansed from the little bit of dirt that was on your hands. In other words, that is not what makes one unclean, but rather the rebellion that comes from within. **Matthew 15:15-20** further clarifies this point.
- "Gentiles only have to do four things"→**Acts 15:1, 6-11, 18-21**
 - What's the issue? People have to be circumcised and keep the Law in order to be saved. V.19-20—These four things characterize pagan idolatry. If you are not willing to give these up, then you won't be willing to come and hear the rest in the synagogue on the Sabbath.
- "Jesus fulfilled the Law"→**Matthew 5:17-20**
 - To "destroy" and "fulfill" are Hebrew idioms, which mean to incorrectly and correctly interpret scripture. V.17—"fulfill" (pleroo-4137) fill full our understanding or to fully preach→**Romans 15:19**; V.18—"fulfill" (ginomai [ghin'-oh-my]-1096) to be accomplished→**Matthew 6:10**

"God has always required His people to put a difference between the sacred and the profane, between the holy and the common. Satan has unceasingly sought to blur this distinction. His final goal is to make sin appear righteous, and righteousness to appear profane. Has he succeeded? Look at modern Christianity and decide for yourself."—Excerpt from *Baptized Paganism* by Dennis Crews