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THE REASON WHY WE ARE NOT TO EAT UNCLEAN MEATS

We all know that in the Bible God has designated some animals as "clean" and fit for us human beings to eat. And all other animals God has designated as "unclean", and we are not to eat any part of any of those "unclean animals". Why?

Why does God not want us to eat any "unclean animals"? What is wrong with those animals? Before coming into God's Church many of us, if not most of us, had eaten unclean meats, and we are still alive. Our supermarkets are loaded with unclean meats, and people outside of God's Church eat unclean meats all the time. In general terms the people who eat unclean meats appear to be just as healthy as we are. So why does God not want us to eat any part of any "unclean animal"?

Were the dietary laws regarding unclean meats just for Old Testament Israel to observe? Were these dietary laws abolished by Jesus Christ? Were the dietary laws just a part of the ritual laws God gave to the Israelites? Why do we as Christians have to adhere to these Old Testament laws regarding unclean meats?

Just how much do you really understand about clean and unclean meats?

THE TERMS "CLEAN" AND "UNCLEAN"

While our English word "**clean**" certainly has several other meanings as well, the most common meaning that readily comes to our minds is "**free from dirt** or pollution". And that is the first meaning listed in Webster's Dictionary. So we most commonly think of "clean" as being the opposite of "dirty".

But that is not the meaning that applies to "clean" and "unclean" animals. "Unclean animals" are not necessarily "dirty", and neither are "clean animals" necessarily "free from dirt".

The first use of the word "clean" in the Bible, in reference to animals, is found in Genesis 7:2, where God was instructing Noah.

Of every **clean** beast (i.e. animal) you shall take to you by sevens, the male and his female: and of beasts (i.e. animals) that *are* **not clean** by two, the male and his female. (Genesis 7:2)

The Hebrew word here translated as "clean" is "**tahor**", and this Hebrew word really means: **pure**, **undefiled**, **unpolluted**. "Tahor" doesn't really refer to "free from dirt".

So what is the difference between the words "clean & unclean" on the one hand, and "pure/undefiled & not pure/defiled" on the other hand? Probably the main difference between these two groups of words, in the context of the Old Testament Scriptures, is this:

1) When we think of "**clean**", we are generally thinking of **the outside** of something. Here "clean" refers to a condition. "**A condition**" is something that can change very quickly, as in: this morning I was dirty from working in the garden, but I have washed and now I am clean again.

2) When we think of "**pure**", we are generally thinking of **the inside** of something. Pure refers to an attribute. "**An attribute**" is something that is more or less permanent, an inherent quality or feature. And in many cases attributes can never be changed.

Now the Hebrew adjective "**tahor**" generally refers to an inherent quality or feature, something on **the inside**, just like the English word "pure". And so a less ambiguous way to translate Genesis 7:2 would be:

Of every **pure** animal you shall take to you by sevens, the male and his female: and of animals that *are* **not pure** by two, the male and his female. (Genesis 7:2)

Referring to animal categories as "pure" and "not pure" may sound a little strange to our ears, and perhaps make us think of breeding practices for domestic animals (e.g. a purebred). But the word "pure" in Genesis 7:2 has nothing at all to do with breeding practices.

Further, the Hebrew word "tahor" is in fact translated unambiguously as "**pure**" and "lo-tahor" is translated as "**not pure**" in a number of **different European languages** (e.g. German, Dutch, French, Italian, etc.), languages which differentiate more distinctly between "clean" and "pure". These translations are in recognition of the fact that this Hebrew word does mean "pure" and not simply "free from dirt". Native speakers of those other European languages would spontaneously understand this. The Hebrew word "tahor" really refers to an attribute that is on the inside, totally independent of the presence or absence of dirt on the outside.

I mention this because years ago someone tried to tell me that with our modern high standards of hygiene employed in the pig farming industry, pigs are just as "clean" as cattle. The man obviously thought that the word "clean", when applied to "clean animals", is a reference to "free from dirt and pollution on the outside". He took the word "clean" literally. He didn't understand that the Hebrew should really be rendered as "pure". "Pure" is an attribute, while "clean" is only a condition.

That is why I am pointing out that it would be less ambiguous, as well as more correct, to translate these two expressions in Genesis 7:2 as "pure animals" and as "animals that are not pure". However, note my comments under "Convention of Terms".

The question is: why did God create some animals as "pure" and all other animals as "not pure"? Why did God divide all the animals He created into these **two broad categories**?

CONVENTION OF TERMS

Because in English we in God's Church are so familiar with the expressions "clean animals" and "clean meats" and "unclean animals" and "unclean meats", I will use those expressions throughout the remainder of this article. It is not that I believe that we must necessarily change away from using these expressions.

Rather, I believe that **it is important that we understand** what those expressions actually refer to in the Bible. If we understand that we are not using the words "clean" and "unclean" with their hygienic meanings, then we should not have a problem. And we don't want to "strive about words".

Thus: With "**clean animals**" I will be referring to "animals that are pure"; with "**clean meats**" I will be referring to "meat from animals that are pure"; with "**unclean animals**" I will be referring to "animals that are not pure"; and with "**unclean meats**" I will be referring to "meat from animals that are not pure".

So let’s continue to use the terms with which we are familiar, but understand what those terms actually mean from a biblical perspective.

THE REASON FOR THESE TWO CATEGORIES

The first point that we should note is that establishing the two categories of **clean animals** and **unclean animals** had nothing at all to do with which animals human beings would be allowed to eat. **These two categories were initially not established by God for dietary purposes!** The dietary application for these two categories of animals only came later, well after these two categories of animals had been created.

That should be easier to understand when we keep in mind that "clean" here means "pure". **"Pure" is not a designation that identifies food!** So even **if** God had never intended for human beings to ever eat the meat of any animal, **there still would have been the two categories** of clean animals and unclean animals, categories that were established on exactly the same day on which God created Adam and Eve, i.e. on the sixth day.

There is a completely different reason for why God divided the animals He created into these two broad categories, a reason that has nothing to do with us human beings eating or not eating certain animals.

Let’s notice a principle that the Apostle Paul explained.

Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God has showed *it* unto them. For **the invisible things** of Him from the creation of the world **are clearly seen**, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead (may be understood); so that they are without excuse. (Romans 1:19-20)

"The invisible things" (i.e. the spirit world) existed first, and the "visible things" (i.e. the physical, material world) only came second. God created the physical universe in such a way that it would reflect various aspects of the invisible spirit world. In other words, by looking at God’s physical creation all around us, we can learn some things about the spirit world, which is invisible to us. That is what God intended.

So God used the physical creation to reveal certain things that we cannot see with our eyes. Now as far as our subject of clean and unclean animals is concerned, to find a parallel we need to look for where "unclean" is mentioned for the spirit world. So let’s do that.

When Satan had sinned, he had defiled himself and he had become unclean and impure before God. Satan’s mind had become corrupted. And so we know that demons are also known as "**unclean spirits**". The expression "unclean spirits" is a reference to the angels that sinned with Satan.

The problem with these unclean spirits is **the attitude** and **the perverted minds** which these spirit beings have developed. Their perverted, selfish way of thinking became "a permanent attribute" for these demons, not merely a superficial "condition".

Their way of thinking is foul and polluted. The way these demons had "walked" (i.e. had conducted their lives), how their minds worked, and how they processed their thoughts was not right before God. Their minds are guided exclusively by selfishness.

Here is the only Old Testament reference to an unclean spirit.

And it shall come to pass in that day, says the LORD of hosts, *that* I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered: and also I will cause the prophets and **the unclean spirit** to pass out of the land. (Zechariah 13:2)

In the New Testament unclean spirits are mentioned more than 20 times. Here are two examples:

When **the unclean spirit** is gone out of a man, he walks through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. (Matthew 12:43)

And there was in their synagogue a man with **an unclean spirit**; and he cried out, (Mark 1:23)

Since demons are unclean spirits, therefore "clean spirits" would be a reference to God's angels, though they are generally referred to as "the holy angels" (Matthew 25:31; Revelation 14:10; etc.) rather than as "clean spirits".

Thus, before God created any animals in Genesis 1, there were already "clean spirits" and "unclean spirits" in existence. That was **the spiritual reality** before God created any animals in Genesis 1.

So in the spirit realm, which is invisible to our human eyes, there are **two categories of created spirit beings**. There are the holy angels of God (i.e. "clean spirits"), and there are Satan and his demons (i.e. "unclean spirits").

It is this spiritual reality that God chose to highlight by creating two categories of physical animals.

Clean animals represent the holy righteous angels of God, and unclean animals represent the unclean spirits of Satan's realm. This is one example of us being able to understand "the invisible things" by looking at "the things that are made". This is something that "may be known of God" by discerning God's purpose for creating these two categories of animals.

When we understand this purpose for creating these two categories of animals, then we should also recognize that this was not primarily about food, about what we are to eat, and what we are not to eat. The first thing these two categories are supposed to tell us is that there are good (i.e. "pure") spirit beings, whose ways of thinking are "clean" (i.e. pure), out there in our environment, and there are also bad (i.e. "not pure") spirit beings out there, whose ways of thinking are "not pure".

So designating a group of animals in our environment as "unclean" is to tell us that **there are unclean spirits in our environment** here on earth, who seek to influence us human beings to accept their "unclean" ways of thinking.

TO AVOID MISUNDERSTANDINGS

We are quick to infer our own understanding into the things other people say. And I don't want anyone to draw the wrong conclusions from what I will say in this article. So to make my own position quite clear:

I am not a vegetarian, and I have never at any time been a vegetarian. In fact, I eat meat on an almost daily basis. The things I will say in this article are not intended in any way to encourage anyone to become a vegetarian, not at all. While there may certainly be health benefits, for people with certain health issues, in completely avoiding eating any meat, I don't believe such a decision should ever be made for religious or moral/ethical reasons.

In fact, I personally believe that vegetarianism accepted **for religious or moral/ethical reasons** is a "doctrine of demons". I believe this because the Apostle Paul clearly stated that one of the teachings of "seducing spirits" is "to abstain from meats (foods) which God has created to be received with thanksgiving" (see 1 Timothy 4:1-3). Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14 list in detail the animals whose meat we are "to receive with thanksgiving". And God is the One who establishes "moral/ethical standards". Any moral/ethical decisions in opposition to what God has stated are of no value at all. **We cannot possibly be more morally correct than God.**

So in our world today eating the meat of "clean animals" certainly has God's approval. Eating meat is not commanded, any more than eating potatoes or carrots or bananas is commanded. But eating the meat of clean animals is **an optional part** of the vast dietary diversity that God has created for us human beings.

That diversity is so vast that I don't believe that any one human being can ever eat some of every single food item that God has created for human consumption. Any one of us can only eat foods from a relatively small segment of all the foods God created for us.

There are fruits and vegetables and seeds and herbs and grains and nuts and berries and tubers in other parts of the world that we have never even heard of, let alone eaten. So any one of us will only experience a small segment of all the food choices that God created. And "clean animals" and "clean fish" and "clean birds" are a small part of those food choices.

And I certainly do not believe that it is supposedly "better" to not eat any meat, not when I myself eat meat on an almost daily basis. So please do not draw the false conclusion that I am somehow promoting vegetarianism, because that is simply not the case. I'm doing nothing more than explaining the facts, facts that do not lead to "a vegetarian conclusion".

With that clarified, let's look at the three occasions when God gave dietary instructions.

THREE OCCASIONS WHEN GOD SPELLED OUT MAN'S DIET

On three occasions in the Old Testament God gave specific instructions regarding the things man may eat. Those three occasions were:

1) When God created Adam.

2) When Noah came out of the ark.

3) When Israel was in the wilderness, before they crossed the Jordan.

Let's look at all three occasions.

INSTRUCTIONS TO ADAM

God created a garden for Adam to live in, even before creating Eve.

And the LORD God had planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there He put the man whom He had formed. (Genesis 2:8)

Now Adam was clueless. He knew nothing, since everything was new to him. He couldn't look at other people, to see what he should do or how he should behave, because there was nobody else. Also, Adam had never in his very short life yet eaten anything. He himself didn't know what he should or should not eat.

All Adam saw was lush trees with fruits hanging on them, and bushes and shrubs and flowers, and a river gently flowing along. And Adam saw a huge variety of pairs of animals all around him. All of them were peaceful, and all of them were herbivores. There was no fear, and none of the animals were skittish at either Adam's presence, or at the presence of any of the other animals.

Everything was peaceful and calm. The animals were grazing and browsing. That included animals like 2 lions, 2 wolves, 2 leopards and 2 bears (like Isaiah 11:6-7).

Now all the trees which God had created in that garden were both "pleasant to the sight" and "**good for food**" (see Genesis 2:9). The Hebrew noun here translated as "food" is "ma'akal". This noun is formed from the verb "akal" which means "to eat". "Food" is a good translation for "ma'akal".

So here in verse 9 God is spelling out **a source of food** for Adam. What are all the animals eating? Vegetation ... grasses, fruits, leaves, nuts, shrubs, etc. And what was Adam to eat, according to verse 9? Verse 9 implies that Adam was to eat the fruits growing on the trees.

Having told us that "trees" were to provide food for Adam, God then commanded Adam regarding what diet he was to follow.

And the LORD God **commanded** the man, saying, **Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat**: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it: for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die. (Genesis 2:16-17)

So Adam, who had thus far never eaten anything in his short life, was commanded to eat a vegetarian diet. He could eat the fruit of any tree (except one!), because there weren't any poisonous plants in the garden. They were all "good for food". Now "trees" represent all vegetation. God was saying: **you are to eat anything that grows out of the ground** (i.e. except from the one tree).

From this initial instruction we would have to conclude that, at the time of Adam's creation, **it was God's intention that Adam would be a vegetarian**. There is no hint whatsoever that God intended Adam to eat the meat of any of the animals God had just created hours before creating Adam.

Rather, the example from Adam's entire environment was that plants are the only food source for everyone ... for every animal and for human beings. This example included lions and wolves and leopards lying down together with the cow and the sheep, all of which God had created hours before creating Adam (see again Isaiah 11:6-7).

When every single animal in existence, including all the ones we today identify as carnivores, was content to eat a 100% vegetarian diet, then that set a very emphatic example for Adam that "food" means "something that grows out of the ground".

At that point in time I don't believe that it would even have occurred to Adam to think: **I'd like to eat one of these animals** that is standing in front of me, munching on grass. That thought would not even remotely have come into Adam's mind at that point in time.

Furthermore, Adam and Eve would most certainly have been **forced to be vegetarians** for at least the first six months of their lives! They could hardly have eaten the cow or the sheep or the goat or the deer,

etc., when there was only one male and one female animal of each species. Nor would it have been appropriate for Adam to slaughter for food the very first clean animals that were ever born, because those new animals were very essential for the species to develop.

In order for all of the pairs of animals that God had created **to each develop into a species** with hundreds of members, to then develop further into thousands and then millions of members, it was absolutely essential that human beings and all other animals were herbivores (i.e. vegetarians) ... or all animal life would just collapse! Those original two lions and leopards and wolves could hardly have fasted for six months, until the first sheep and the first goat were born, so that these carnivores could eat another animal.

Think this whole scenario though.

It should be obvious that **the entire animal creation could only succeed if there were no carnivores in the environment**. Even a single carnivore (or meat-eating human being) would have wreaked havoc amongst the animals God had created. The carnivores would have had to eat long before the first new animals could possibly be born. And killing one animal of a pair would have been the end of that particular species. **Within four weeks** of Adam's creation a whole lot of species would already have been on the path to extinction ... if there were any carnivores, or if Adam was a meat-eater.

God's command to Adam to eat the fruits hanging on the trees perfectly integrated Adam into the whole environment that God had created. It said: Adam, you go ahead and do what all these other creatures I have created are doing ... **eat the fruits** that I have provided for you and for all the animals.

But by that point in time certain pairs of animals, with specific characteristics, had **already** been designated by God as "clean animals". They are the ones of which Noah much later took seven pairs into the ark. That designation of "clean" was in spite of God at that point **certainly not** wanting Adam to eat any of those clean animals.

Here is a key:

God designated certain animals as "clean" because God had given to those animals **certain distinct characteristics and attributes**, to represent the "holy angels of God" (i.e. clean spirits). God did not designate those animals as "clean" because they were (supposedly) destined to be eaten by Adam and the human family.

It was the garden that provided all the food supplies that Adam would ever have needed. In other words, **it was God who provided all the food** that Adam would ever need. If Adam had not eaten the forbidden fruit, then that situation would have continued, with God providing all the food for mankind, in the same way that God provides all the food that is needed by all animals.

But Adam sinned.

And because Adam had sinned, therefore God forced Adam to start producing his own food supply. But note the following point:

This penalty, having to produce his own food supply, which God imposed **did not change what Adam was to eat**! The penalty from God **only changed how** the food supplies would be produced! Adam was still to only eat the things that the ground would produce. Notice God's statements here:

And unto Adam He said, Because you have hearkened unto the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree, of which I commanded you, saying, you shall not eat of it: **cursed *is* the ground** for your sake;

in sorrow shall you eat *of* it all the days of your life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to you; and **you shall eat the herb of the field**; In the sweat of your face **shall you eat bread**, till you return unto the ground; for out of it were you taken: for dust you *are*, and unto dust shall you return. (Genesis 3:17-19)

This specific aspect of the penalty for sin involved **the human diet**! Instead of God providing all the food for Adam, God was forcing Adam to produce his own food. But in so doing God still spelled out the boundaries for Adam's diet.

What did God mean by cursing the ground for Adam's sake? What was that curse? That curse was **the creation of weeds**! And the creation of **toxic plants**! And the creation of **bugs** that would damage the crops.

Notice the following three statements:

1) In sorrow shall you **eat of it** (i.e. the produce from the ground).

2) You shall **eat the herb** of the field.

3) You shall **eat bread**.

These are **the complete eating instructions** God gave Adam when God expelled Adam from the garden. And they spell out **a vegetarian diet**. At no point did God ever tell Adam to eat the meat of any animal. Every statement to Adam about eating and about food is always a reference to a plant-based diet.

And at no time before the flood did God say anything at all about "eating meat". **Eating meat is simply never mentioned before the flood**. So did any human beings before the flood kill animals and then eat their meat? It is not mentioned, but, as I will explain later, it seems quite likely that some of those "violent people" (see Genesis 6:11, 13) back then had indeed started to kill and to eat various animals. However, this would certainly not have had God's approval, any more than all their other violent acts had God's approval.

So that takes us up to the flood.

Now after the flood God changed the way He would deal with human beings. This subject is discussed thoroughly in my recent article entitled "God's Original Plan & How It Was Modified". In that article I wrote:

"**The new plan** was implemented by God **the day Noah came out of the ark**. But this new plan was not revealed until the time of Moses. And the way God revealed this plan in the days of Moses was through all the annual observances that God instituted at that time."

I also pointed out that after the flood:

"Human nature had not changed in any way. But now (i.e. after the flood) God was prepared to deal with **this hostility of the natural human spirit**."

And **one of the changes** God implemented with His new post-flood plan for dealing with human beings was to make **a change to the human diet**.

GOD'S INSTRUCTIONS AFTER THE FLOOD

When Noah came out of the ark, **the first thing** he did is build an altar, and on that altar he offered a number of animals as sacrifices to God ... one of each clean animal type, and one clean bird type (see Genesis 8:20). Noah had taken 14 animals (i.e. 7 pairs) of each "clean" animal species into the ark, and sacrificing one of those 14 animals did not endanger the development of that species after the flood.

But notice something about Genesis 8:20.

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. (Genesis 8:20)

There is a problem here. And that is this: there are a lot of clean animals that have never been used for sacrifices to God. For example: deer and bison and giraffe and caribou are also clean animals, because they all "part the hoof and chew the cud" (see Leviticus 11:3). But I don't believe that Noah took seven pairs of all of these clean animals into the ark, and I don't believe that Noah sacrificed any of these clean animals.

So "every clean animal" doesn't really mean "**every**"! The same can be said for fowls. Ducks and geese and chickens and turkeys and quails are also clean fowls. But I don't believe that Noah sacrificed any of these specific clean fowls, because they are never used in the sacrificial system. So again, "every clean fowl" doesn't really mean "**every**".

I believe that the Hebrew word here translated as "every" (i.e. "kol") refers to "**all the clean animals and fowls that God has identified as acceptable for sacrificial purposes**". And that means: bulls, sheep, goats and doves. And "that's all", as far as the animals that Noah sacrificed are concerned. But that is certainly "not all" as far as the totality of clean animals is concerned.

So let's be clear regarding what Noah actually did in Genesis 8:20.

Further, Genesis 8:20 is **the first time that "an altar" is mentioned** in the Bible. I take that to mean that before the flood nobody had ever built an altar.

Obviously Noah himself did not think up the idea:

"I am going to do something that nobody has ever done before. I'm going to build a platform, which I will call "an altar". Then I am going to take a bull, a sheep, a goat and a dove and place them on top of this platform and kill all of them. Then I will burn their bodies in a fire that is big enough to burn all of them, and I will tell God that I am burning all these animals as a burnt offering to Him."

No, Noah didn't come up with this idea. The idea to build an altar, and then to sacrifice some very specific animals on that altar was based on **specific instructions** God had at some point given to Noah, but which instructions God chose not to record in the Bible. God had also given Noah very specific instructions before the flood, regarding what Noah was to take into the ark. And so God had undoubtedly also given Noah specific instructions for what he was to do when he came out of the ark.

Now there is an extremely important reason for why Noah performed all these sacrifices, and why he included one animal from every category of sacrificial animals in these sacrifices. Do you know what that reason is?

Building that altar and performing those sacrifices immediately after leaving the ark represented **a visual enactment of God at that very point in time instituting a new plan for dealing with mankind**.

It was from the day that Noah came out of the ark that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ's life for our sins was added to God's plan of salvation.

And for that reason God had instructed Noah to sacrifice one animal from every category of animals that were going to be used **on a voluntary basis** to refer to the sacrifice which Jesus Christ would later bring for our sins.

I say "on a voluntary basis" because originally God had not intended to give the people of Israel any formal and official sacrificial system. As God tells us through the Prophet Jeremiah:

For **I spoke not unto your fathers**, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, **concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices**: But this thing commanded I them, saying, **Obey my voice**, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people: and walk you in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you. (Jeremiah 7:22-23)

A sacrificial system was not a part of the original plan for Israel. If the people of Israel had not constantly disobeyed God, then **the formal sacrificial system** with the Aaronic priesthood in charge **would never have been established**! After all, the Aaronic sacrificial system was **only added later** to the covenant God had made with the people of Israel "**because of transgressions**" (see Galatians 3:19).

And that is why it was important that Noah sacrificed one animal from every category of animals that was acceptable before God. God used Noah to establish an acceptable way (i.e. acceptable to God) for sinful human beings from then onwards to seek contact with the God who would no longer walk amongst them, as He had done before the flood.

As long as sacrifices were only voluntary, **people themselves could choose**, based on the circumstances involved and on their personal financial situations, which of the acceptable clean animals they would bring as a voluntary sacrifice to God. Once the Levitical sacrificial system was instituted, **God made the decisions** regarding which animals would be acceptable for which specific type of sacrifice. With the institution of the Levitical priesthood God in effect made the process formal.

So on the day that Noah came out of the ark God implemented a new plan for working with human beings. And one part of that changed plan was that **God also changed** (we might say "expanded") **the dietary instructions for human beings**. But there was more to this change than meets the eye, as I will explain shortly.

Let's look at those instructions.

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 ye not eat. (Genesis 9:3-4)

If this verse has been correctly preserved from the original text, and there is no reason to doubt that it has, then this verse means that **God here allowed Noah and all human beings to eat the meat of all animals**.

To be quite clear: **I personally would like to believe** that God here meant "all clean animals". But I have to admit that **God didn't actually say that**! This is especially significant because God had just previously revealed that Noah only sacrificed "clean" animals. So the concept of "clean animals" has already been mentioned. But here God does not use the word for "clean".

These verses record that God was speaking! These are not the words of some human being. And **God always knows what He is saying**! When you and I are confronted about something we have said, we

might sometimes reply: "well, that isn't really what I meant ... what I really meant was ...". But that is not true for God! **God does not forget to include some words**!

But read on. The correct answer will surprise you.

God did mention one specific restriction: **don't eat any blood**!

The fact that God chose to spell out this specific instruction regarding not eating blood, and at the same time not say anything else about which types or categories of animals man was allowed to eat, is significant. It is significant because it seems to imply that there are no other restrictions on God's statement in verse 3.

Furthermore, God's statement "**even as the green herb**" confirms that **before the flood** God had only given man plants (i.e. "green herbs") to eat! God is saying: **from now on** you can eat **all animals** in the same way that until now you were only permitted to eat a vegetarian diet consisting of fruits, vegetables, grains, nuts, etc.

This statement "even as the green herb" is highly significant, because it places eating the meat of all animals on the same level as the pre-flood vegetarian diet.

That looks pretty rough, doesn't it? How could God possibly have meant "all animals"? Surely God expected us to figure out that He really meant only clean animals, right?

At this point we can do one of two things:

Either: We find a way to rationalize the "every moving thing that lives" statement in such a way, that we can convince ourselves, that God surely must have meant only clean animals. In this case we rationalize without any real understanding.

Or: We ask ourselves some questions: **why** would God possibly have said that? It is self-evident that God doesn't really **want** us human beings to eat dogs and cats and pigs, etc. So **why** would God make a statement that implies that we actually could eat those unclean animals, and seemingly with God's approval? Why? In other words, we can try to **seek answers to an instruction that doesn't really make sense to us**.

So let's look for some answers. Are you ready?

WHAT GOD WAS REALLY DOING HERE

Now while Jesus Christ was pleased with Noah, and blessed Noah and his family (see Genesis 9:1), it is obvious that **Jesus Christ was extremely angry with the rest of mankind**.

That's why God drowned them all in a violent flood. Their perverse and wretched anti-God attitudes, coupled with their extreme violence, had in effect forced Jesus Christ to commit to lay down His own life for sinful humanity, something that had not entered into Christ's mind at the time when He created Adam and Eve.

To be willing to die for our sins had not been a joyful or happy decision for Jesus Christ! It was **a decision that had been forced on Jesus Christ** by our perverse human natures ... i.e. it was forced on Jesus Christ **if** God the Father and Jesus Christ hoped to still achieve Their goal of "creating sons of

God from human beings".

Inserting the sacrifice of Jesus Christ into the plan of salvation was the only way to salvage the "creating sons of God project" from almost total failure. And so Jesus Christ willingly committed Himself to live a sinless life and then to die for our sins. But **He was angry at sinful man**, as proved by the flood.

Yes, the flood had been an expression of Jesus Christ's anger at sinful human beings. And yes, God is merciful and slow to anger (see Psalm 103:8-9), and that is proved by God waiting for **over 1,500 years** before deciding to bring on a flood. But enough was enough.

So let's understand something that God will sometimes do when He is angry. In Ezekiel chapter 20 God presents us with a post-flood example of the people of Israel endlessly disobeying God. Let's pick up the account in verse 24.

Because they had **not executed** My judgments, but had **despised** My statutes, and had **polluted** My Sabbaths, and their eyes were after their fathers' **idols**. (Ezekiel 20:24)

What do we have in this verse? We have God being angry with the people of Israel for their endless rebellious ways. Can you see that? So in this situation **how** did God express His anger? Let's see the next verse.

Wherefore **I gave them also statutes *that were* not good, and judgments whereby they should not live**. (Ezekiel 20:25)

Wow! Did you just read that?

Do you mean that God will actually give people **bad laws**?

Yes, that is exactly what I mean!

Now why would the Creator God ever give any people "bad laws"? Why?

The previous verse tells us the answer to this question. God will give people "bad laws" when God is angry, when God is fed up with rebellious human beings.

In other words, God never starts out with giving "bad laws". God is patient. But after endless rebellion and disobedience God will sometimes give people "bad laws", meaning **laws that don't really fit into God's way of life**.

After endless attempts to get people to live by His holy laws, God will at times **give people what they want** ... and **then punish them**!

God explained this approach through the Prophet Jeremiah. Here is a well-known statement.

The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it? (Jeremiah 17:9)

This is the same heart that is "only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5). The Hebrew verb here translated as "desperately wicked" really means "**incurable**". This information is not something Jesus Christ fully understood when He created Adam and Eve. But this is what Christ had learned in the pre-flood period. And so that understanding about the desperately wicked human heart is now **a foundational premise** of God's post-flood revised plan of salvation.

The Jeremiah 17:9 statement by God also reveals that God understands **how difficult it is** to lead human beings to voluntarily repent with a godly repentance, and to then stay faithful to that commitment for the rest of their lives. This is **an extremely difficult task**!

Human minds that are ... "deceitful above all things" ... "incurably wicked" ... "enmity against God" ... "not willing to be subject to the law of God" ... and where "every imagination of the thoughts of human hearts is only evil continually" ... **are not easy to deal with**.

Now when God is dealing with people who are deceitful and incurably wicked, what approach does God take? Let's look at the next verse.

I the LORD search the heart, *I* try the reins, even **to give every man according to his ways**, *and* according to the fruit of his doings. (Jeremiah 17:10)

With "to give every man according to his ways" God is saying: **I'll give them what they want, and then I will punish them**. That way they will learn that what they wanted didn't really give them what they thought it would give them.

When you "try the reins" of a horse that you have never ridden before, you pull gently on this side and on that side, **to see how the horse responds**. It is the horse's response to your tugging on the reins that gives you important information regarding how you can expect the horse to respond to your commands, once you go for a real ride on that horse.

And that's what God does with us!

God confronts us with specific situations, to see how we will respond. How we respond tells God something about our character. That is one way in which God "searches our hearts".

Now when God is dealing with rebellious people, who really want what they want, and who set their hearts on what they want, then **sometimes** God gives them what they want ... **and then punishes them**!

I don't think that God uses this approach with people who have a good attitude towards God, but who through ignorance are making a mistake. In those cases I believe that God will first give such people the opportunity to understand that what they are striving to do or to get is not really right in their specific circumstances.

But **when people know better** (e.g. a married man really wants a different wife, or a married woman really wants a different husband, someone really sets their heart on becoming rich, etc.), and they have a razor-sharp focus on what they want, however they can get it, then sometimes God gives them what they want (e.g. lots of money, or a different spouse, etc.) ... and then punishes them!

Let's consider some examples:

ISRAEL ASKING FOR MEAT

In the second year after the exodus the people started lusting for meat. They were tired of eating the manna. It got to the point where grown men were "weeping" for meat to eat (see Numbers 11:10). As a result, "**the anger of the Eternal was kindled greatly**" (same verse). So Moses himself became a bit discouraged, asking "where am I going to find meat to give to all these people" (verse 13 paraphrased)?

Now notice how God responded. Keep in mind that God was angry with the people. God told Moses:

And say you unto the people, Sanctify yourselves against to morrow, and **you shall eat flesh**: for you have wept in the ears of the LORD, saying, Who shall give us flesh to eat? for *it was* well with us in Egypt: therefore **the LORD will give you flesh**, and you shall eat. You shall not eat one day, nor two days, nor five days, neither ten days, nor twenty days; *But* even a whole month, **until it comes out at your nostrils**, and it be loathsome unto you: because that you have despised the LORD who *is* among you, **and have wept before Him**, saying, Why came we forth out of Egypt? (Numbers 11:18-20)

The people demanded meat to eat. So God said: I will give you meat until it comes out of your nostrils. Now this expression "until it comes out of your nostrils" shows us God's anger with the people. God was not giving them what they demanded as a blessing. No, **God was going to give them meat to eat as a curse**!

God then brought hundreds of millions of quails and had them drop down a mile or two or three away from the camp. In fact, the ground out there was covered with quails to about three feet deep (i.e. two cubits).

Now those who gathered the least gathered "ten homers". Others gathered even more. An homer was about eight bushels. This means that each man gathered **about 80 bushels of quails**. In some families there were two men doing this gathering of quails. They gathered these birds for two days and one night (verse 32), i.e. they spent over 24 hours picking up quails. They gathered **a huge amount of quails** ... trying to stock up meat supplies for the next few months. They were clearly lusting for meat!

Now God is the One who gave the people the quails. God didn't just provide three or four birds per person. No, God provided 100 and more birds per person. They got what they wanted.

So the people started eating these birds. And then what?

And **while the flesh *was* yet between their teeth**, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the LORD was kindled against the people, and **the LORD smote the people with a very great plague**. And he called the name of that place Kibroth-hattaavah (meaning "graves of lust"): because there **they buried the people that lusted**. (Numbers 11:33-34)

God gave the people what they lusted for, and then God killed a very great number of them!

The people really had no excuse. For over a year they had already been eating manna. And they knew full well that they were **never allowed to gather more than they could eat in one day** (except on a Friday, when they were to gather for two days). They had learned that lesson because any manna kept overnight (except on a Friday night) would rot and create an awful stench in their tents.

God expected the people to understand the following:

If God only wants us to have manna for one day at a time, then that **obviously implies** that therefore when God provides meat for us, then **we likewise must only gather enough meat for one day for our family**. And when God said: "you will eat meat for a whole month until it comes out of your nostrils", then that was a very strong warning, that we should have replied: **not so, Lord**, but as with the manna, so also with meat; and **we must only gather enough for one day at a time**. And we must trust You to supply all our needs.

In Numbers 11:19-20 (i.e. you shall eat meat for a whole month until it comes out your nostrils) God had given the people of Israel "**a bad judgment whereby they should not live**". And the people should have realized that. The sheer volume of birds they collected was an open display of how greatly they lusted for meat.

Numbers 11 is an example of what God stated in Ezekiel 20:25. Let's look at another example, where **God punished a man for doing exactly what God had told the man to do**.

THE PAGAN PROPHET BALAAM

We are all familiar with this story.

Balak, the king of Moab, was afraid of Israel, and so he sent for the pagan prophet Balaam to come and curse Israel. This account is recorded in Numbers chapter 22. Balak had promised Balaam a huge amount of money if he would curse Israel.

So that night God appeared in a vision or dream to Balaam. And God then clearly told Balaam:

And God said unto Balaam, **you shall not go with them; you shall not curse the people: for they *are* blessed**. (Numbers 22:12)

This is a clear and unmistakable answer from God. Balaam correctly understood what God was telling him. So the next morning Balaam dutifully tells Balak's high-powered delegation: sorry, fellas, but God won't let me go with you (verse 13).

When Balak hears this answer, he says: Balaam is just holding out for more money. Okay, go back and offer him more money than earlier. So his messengers go back to Balaam and offer even more money than before. Now notice Balaam's response.

And Balaam answered and said unto the servants of Balak, If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, **I cannot go beyond the word of the LORD my God, to do less or more**. (Numbers 22:18)

That sounds really good, doesn't it? You might almost get the impression that Balaam might have been a servant of the true God, right? But there is just one problem here. Do you know what that is?

The problem here is: **this was the wrong answer**!

It would have been the correct answer if his next sentence was: so go back home to Balak, and don't come back with this specific matter.

But it was the wrong answer when Balaam's next sentence was: stay here tonight and **I will ask God one more time**.

What do you mean ... ask God one more time? God's first answer was clear. God told you "**don't go**". God also told you "**don't curse Israel**". And God had further told you "**they are blessed**". Balaam had very clearly understood God's original instructions. But Balaam also wanted that pile of money that Balak was offering him. And so he thought: why not try one more time to get God's permission?

So when he approached God the second time, he was already in serious trouble. He wanted **permission to do something contrary to the instructions God had given him earlier**. That was already worthy of the death penalty, seeking to circumvent God's will.

So now let's notice what God said.

And God came unto Balaam at night, and said unto him, If the men come to call you, **rise up, *and* go with them**; but yet the word which I shall say unto you, that shall you do. (Numbers 22:20)

Those words were music to Balaam's ears! What Balaam should have heard here is:

Go with them Balaam, ... and **when you do then I will kill you**!

The added statement "yet the word which I shall say unto you, that shall you do" could perhaps have made Balaam feel somewhat secure, but it doesn't change the underlying situation. Balaam knew very clearly that this new instruction was **the opposite** of what God had commanded him earlier. That all by itself should have raised a major question in Balaam's mind. But all he could see was the opportunity to get his hands on a pile of money.

Even wicked King Ahab had more sense than Balaam. When Ahab really wanted to go to war, and when all his false prophets told him to go to war, he called God's prophet Micaiah. Micaiah then told Ahab:

So he came to the king. And the king said unto him, Micaiah, shall we go against Ramothgilead to battle, or shall we forbear? And he answered him, **Go, and prosper: for the LORD shall deliver *it* into the hand of the king**. (1 Kings 22:15)

What Micaiah said was: "sure, go to war, God will be with you". Now Ahab had enough sense to know that **this statement was simply not true**! So Ahab then replied:

And the king said unto him, **How many times shall I adjure you that you tell me nothing but *that which is* true** in the name of the LORD? (1 Kings 22:16)

In other words, Ahab was smart enough to realize that no way was what Micaiah had said true. And **that is also what Balaam should have understood**, that no way did God want him to go with Balak's messengers.

Micaiah told Ahab what he wanted to hear, and God told Balaam what he wanted to hear. Ahab at least understood how the statement he had heard was really meant (i.e. it was meant in sarcasm), while Balaam was totally oblivious to the real meaning and intent of God's statement to him.

And both of them died shortly after these events. Ahab died in battle shortly later, and Balaam was killed by the Israelites a little later.

Now the point is:

In verse 20 God told Balaam: rise up and go with the men. And when Balaam followed this instruction to the letter in verse 21, then ...

And God's anger was kindled because he went ... (Numbers 22:22)

God is angry with Balaam because Balaam is doing exactly what God had told him to do. Can you see that? So **why** is God angry? God is angry with Balaam because from God's original instructions **Balaam should have known better**! He should have known, just like Ahab knew that what Micaiah had said couldn't possibly be true.

And God will be angry with you and with me, if we are ever faced with someone telling us what we want to hear, which also happens to be contrary to instructions from God that we have always understood, if we then accept those things that we want to hear (you might call them "smooth things", see Isaiah 30:10).

So now let's get back to what God said to Noah, when Noah came out of the ark.

EVERY MOVING THING THAT LIVES SHALL BE FOOD FOR YOU

Let's look again at Genesis 9:3.

Every moving thing that lives shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things. (Genesis 9:3)

Let's keep in mind that five verses earlier (i.e. Genesis 8:20) God has told us that Noah had sacrificed "clean animals" and "clean birds". There God specifically used the words for "**clean**" (i.e. pure) and for "**animals**" and for "**birds**".

And now five verses later God does not used any of those three words. Instead of specifying animals or birds for us to eat, God uses the all-encompassing expression "**every moving** (i.e. creeping) **thing**". All animals move, whether they are clean or whether they are not clean. And all reptiles also move, and so do all insects.

What Genesis 9:3 really says is: **if it moves you can eat it**! The only restriction is: don't eat any blood (verse 4).

What was God doing here?

God knows that the human mind is still just as hostile towards God as it was before the flood. And I suspect, though I have no way of proving this, that before the flood many people had started eating **whatever animals they wanted to eat**. The earth had become "corrupt before God" and "filled with violence" (see Genesis 6:11). That "violence" surely must also have extended to how man dealt with animals. Genesis 6:11 describes **a pre-flood world without any restraints**.

And therefore God knew that it wouldn't be long before human beings would once again fill this earth with violence. And so, as a way of protecting the animal species that came through the flood from man's violent ways, **God changed the natures of animals**. God changed the natures of animals as soon as they had walked off the ark.

Before the flood animals had not been afraid of human beings. But once the animals had all left the ark, then God said:

And **the fear of you** and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, **upon all that moves *upon* the earth**, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered. (Genesis 9:2)

From then onwards animals would fear man. Notice the expression "**all that moves upon the earth**". In this context this is clearly not a reference to "clean animals", absolutely not. But **this** (all that moves) is the very group which in the next verse is given to man for food.

Now "the fear of you" was **to protect the animals from extinction**, because man would kill them to eat them, or to get their furs or their skins. And fleeing from any contact with man would protect animals.

So when God in the next verse said: "every moving thing that lives shall be food for you", then that was ...

- the **"if the men come to you, go with them" moment**;

- the **"you shall eat meat until it comes out of your nostrils" moment**.

In other words, God told mankind after the flood: go ahead and eat whatever animals you like (but don't eat blood), **and then I will punish you**!

Did God really want people to eat "every moving thing"? **Absolutely not**! But did God know that people would eat "every moving thing" with or without permission from God? Yes, He did, just like God knew that Balaam would go with the messengers.

God expected human beings to say together with the Apostle Peter: "**not so**, **Lord**: for nothing common or unclean has at any time entered into my mouth" (Acts 11:8). But the vast majority of human beings are not of a mind to think that way.

Genesis 9:3 is one of the occasions to which Ezekiel 20:25 applies. Here is that verse again:

Wherefore I gave them also **statutes *that were* not good**, and **judgments whereby they should not live**. (Ezekiel 20:25)

So here is my point:

God absolutely does not want any human beings to eat any unclean animals. That has always been true. But instead of trying to explain away God's statement in Genesis 9:3, which statement is not really ambiguous at all, we should understand that **Jesus Christ expected human beings to disagree** with this permission to eat anything that moves. You know, like God **expected** Balaam to disagree with the instruction "go with the men", and like God **expected** the Apostle Peter to disagree with the instruction "rise, Peter, kill and eat" in Acts 10:13-14, and like God **expected** the Israelites to understand that they should not have gathered more quails than they could possibly eat in one day.

God expects us to use our minds!

God is not looking for **brain-dead people who will obey Him**. If we don't understand **why** we are doing what is right before God, **then** our doing what is right before God actually has no value at all! Yes, we need to start obeying God from the time we understand what God wants us to do, whether or not we understand the significance of what God tells us to do. But then we must come to an understanding of what God is telling us. And then we have to obey God **with our minds**, so that our actions of obedience/compliance will be of some value before God. Ignorant obedience and accidental obedience and rebellious obedience don't really have any value.

So instead of trying to somehow explain away what God said in Genesis 9:3, let's understand that God was really saying: you can eat anything that moves, crawls or creeps ... **and then I will punish you**! That's because you should use your mind, and **you really should know better**. This is a matter of understanding the approach God was taking, the same approach God took at other times when dealing with rebellious sinners.

So did God after the flood say that people could eat any animal that moves? Yes, He did! Does that mean that it was okay for people to eat unclean animals? No, it doesn't! Just like it wasn't okay for Balaam to go with Balak's messengers. God expects people to use their minds.

But human beings didn't understand. And so different groups of people after the flood would eat different animals. And God **punished** this conduct by creating sicknesses and **diseases as penalties**. As God later told Moses shortly after the exodus from Egypt:

And said, **if you will diligently hearken** to the voice of the LORD your God, and will do that which is right in his sight, and will give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, **I will put none of these diseases upon you, which I have brought upon the Egyptians**: for I *am* the LORD that heals you. (Exodus 15:26)

God actively "put diseases" upon the Egyptians for breaking the laws of God. And God was saying: if you willingly live by My laws, then I will not put those diseases upon you. The clear implication here is: **but if you don't live by My laws**, then I will also put those diseases on you. "Those diseases" are penalties for breaking specific laws of God. And the dietary laws of God feature very prominently in this matter.

It seems that God's servants back then, like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, understood God's dietary instructions. And so they farmed primarily with cattle, sheep and goats as food sources, and with camels and donkeys as beasts of burden and as modes of transport.

So here is the point to note:

After the flood God expanded the human diet to **include meat**, **but without specifying** which animals were available for human beings to eat. All 8 people who came out of the ark had lived in the world before the flood for close to 100 years, and, in the case of Noah and his wife, for several centuries. **God expected them to know** which animals they could eat (e.g. Noah knew quite clearly which animals were "clean"), and which animals they should not eat.

So let's move on to the time of the exodus.

AT THE EXODUS

That was the time when God chose a whole nation for Himself as "His people". And so that was also the time when God spelled out very many of His laws. God made a covenant (i.e. an agreement) with Israel. That was the first time in the Bible that God actually spelled out His laws for human beings to live by.

So once the people of Israel were in the wilderness, away from all Egyptian influences, **God then spelled out the dietary laws** for His people. These laws are recorded in Leviticus 11, and then repeated with slight variations in Deuteronomy 14.

Now already back in the creation week God had created the categories of clean animals and unclean animals. This distinction pointed to the existence of "clean spirit beings" (the holy angels of God) and "unclean spirit beings" (Satan and his demons). The distinction between these two categories of animals is identified by "clean animals" possessing certain characteristics which the "unclean animals" don't possess.

However, in the account of the time before the flood God never spelled out this distinction between clean and unclean animals. If human beings were not going to eat any animals (i.e. which had been God's intention before the flood), then **there was no need** to spell out the distinction between the two categories.

After the flood God had then given the very general instruction: you can eat anything that moves. That instruction was given to **humanity in general**, and implied was: when you do eat the wrong animals, then I will punish you severely by creating **sicknesses that are triggered by eating things that you should not eat**.

After the flood God had added the second resurrection to His plan, and God was not going to work with "humanity in general". Rather, God had decided to look for **one individual** whom He could test, and through whom He could then start a nation. It took a couple of centuries to find a suitable individual, and that individual turned out to be Abraham.

Now people in general were not prepared to live by God's laws, and God had decided that He would only work with all of them later, in the second resurrection. But if people don't live by God's laws, then **from a spiritual point of view it doesn't make a difference** whether they eat only clean meats, or whether they also eat unclean meats.

Clean and unclean meats are simply not an issue with people who don't submit their whole lives to God. Yes, it is a health issue, and people may live healthier lives if they don't eat unclean meats; but it is not a spiritual issue for **people who don't submit themselves to God in all other areas of their lives**.

So when God called Abraham's descendants out of Egyptian slavery, **then** God for the first time provided **some detailed dietary instructions**. Those instructions were given **for God's people**. And those instructions most certainly apply to God's Church today.

Here is the situation that we are faced with today:

The world all around us lives by Genesis 9:3. **God's people**, on the other hand, live by Leviticus chapter 11.

In the world all around us (almost) "**anything that moves**" is looked upon as **food** by some people somewhere in the world. But for the people of God, for some animal to be looked upon as a food item, that animal has to be "**cloven-footed**" **and** it also has to "**chew the cud**" (see Leviticus 11:3 below). (Plus the instructions regarding clean fish and clean fowls.)

Let's briefly look at the dietary instructions God gave in Leviticus 11 and in Deuteronomy 14.

Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, **These *are* the animals which you shall eat among all the animals that *are* on the earth**. (Leviticus 11:2)

This is **the first place** in the Bible where God proceeds to identify clean animals. This is a refining, a narrowing down of the very general instruction in Genesis 9:3. Limiting ourselves to land animals (i.e. not considering fish and fowls), we now see the identifying characteristics for clean animals. There are two distinct characteristics, and for any animal to be a member of the "clean animal category" **it must possess both characteristics**.

Whatsoever **parts the hoof**, and is **cloven-footed**, *and* **chews the cud**, among the beasts, that shall you eat. (Leviticus 11:3)

So the two distinguishing characteristics of clean animals are:

1) The animal must have a hoof that is fully split into two toes.

2) The animal must also chew the cud.

Leviticus 11 then lists a number of animals that are **not clean**, because they only possess one of these two attributes. Here in Leviticus 11 the only animals identified are those that are not clean. But in Deuteronomy 14 these instructions are expanded, by listing several animals that **are** clean. Here are these instructions from Deuteronomy 14.

These *are* the beasts which you shall eat: the **ox**, the **sheep**, and the **goat**, the **hart** (deer), and the **roebuck**, and the **fallow deer**, and the **wild goat**, and the **pygarg** (type of antelope), and the **wild ox**, and the **chamois** (mountain sheep or antelope?). And every beast that **parts the hoof**, and cleaves the cleft into two claws, *and* **chews the cud** among the beasts, that you shall eat. (Deuteronomy 14:4-6)

Now the two vital characteristics involve the following:

1) The divided hoof affects **how these animals walk**.

2) Chewing the cud involves **how they process their food**.

THE CLOVEN HOOF

Compared to the solid hoof of a horse or donkey, the cloven hoof provides more dexterity and a surer footing in slippery places. Now the act of "walking" is used in the Bible to represent "living". God's servants "walked with God" (e.g. Enoch, Noah, Abraham, etc.), meaning that they conducted their lives in submission to God's laws.

Earlier I mentioned that clean animals in a way represent "clean spirits" (i.e. the holy angels of God). The holy angels of God "walk" the right way before God, whereas unclean spirits "walk" the wrong way before God.

Making a cloven hoof a required attribute for a clean animal should make us think about **how we "walk" before God**.

CHEWING THE CUD

When we eat, we take food into our bodies. Eating is used to represent what we take into our minds. Physically we feed our bodies, and mentally we feed our minds.

Carnivores typically tear a piece of flesh from the animals they have hunted and killed, and then they just swallow that piece of meat. They don't "examine" each piece of meat that they swallow, except perhaps with a quick sniff. They also don't try to savor the taste of their food. No, they just "wolf it down", where their stomachs will then do all the work of digesting what they have swallowed. They don't eat their food for the taste. Further, a major attribute of carnivores is that **they are extremely selfish** when they eat their food (yes, there are some exceptions). When lions have killed a buffalo or an antelope, then every lion tries to get the most for himself, to the point of threatening any other lion who also wants to feed.

Animals that chew the cud, by contrast, swallow as much food as they can manage. They chew it a little bit before swallowing it, where most of it is then stored in a special compartment in the stomach. There the first stage of digestion then takes place. Later, when they have eaten enough food for the time being, then they regurgitate this partially-digested stored food, and then **they chew it all over again**, this time very methodically and very thoroughly. Cows spend around eight hours per day chewing the cud.

In that way they break down the food they have taken in. They break down the cellulose in the grasses and plants they have eaten. By the time they swallow it a second time, they have thoroughly chewed every single bit of the food they had regurgitated. We might say that they have "proved" every single bit of the food they had initially swallowed fairly quickly.

A major characteristic of clean animals is that **they don't eat selfishly** like the carnivores. They don't threaten others who are grazing alongside of them.

The lessons for us should be clear:

We need to examine everything that we take in. We should not process information presented to us the way carnivores eat their food. Rather, we should process information presented to us the way ruminants eat and digest their food.

That means carefully evaluating all the information, instructions and teachings that are presented to us. Accepting information without first scrutinizing it is like carnivores "wolfing down" whatever food is presented to them. Carefully proving all things, whether what we have been told is true and correct or not (see Acts 17:11), is like an animal "chewing the cud", carefully going over what has previously been ingested.

If we give it some thought, then we should recognize that the two distinguishing features of clean animals actually focus on two important aspects of our daily lives. We need to consider how we "walk" before God, that we don't "slip up" in our commitment to God. And we also need to "prove all things" by carefully examining them with our minds (like chewing the cud); and then "holding fast" those things which we establish are true and correct (see 1 Thessalonians 5:21).

UNCLEAN SPIRITS

Satan was responsible for "a third part of the stars of heaven" being thrown to the earth (see Revelation 12:4), meaning that a third part of the angels followed Satan in rebelling against God, and in the process they all became demons. They became "unclean spirits".

I mentioned earlier that this is the main reason why God established the categories of clean animals and unclean animals. These two categories of animals reveal why these unclean spirits ended up rebelling against their Creator.

Here is what this teaches us.

It all started after God had sent Satan to this earth with one third of all the angels, to prepare this earth for the next phase of God's plan at that time. At some point Satan had an evil selfish thought. That thought was:

For you have said in your heart, I will ascend into heaven, **I will exalt my throne** above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north. (Isaiah 14:13)

Satan's motivation was totally selfish. He wanted to exalt himself. He didn't care about anyone else. But in order to advance himself, he felt that he needed the help of others. He needed the help of all the angels whom God the Father had entrusted to Satan's leadership. And we know that Satan managed to persuade every single one of them to join him in rebellion against God.

Now **the establishment of the two categories of clean animals and unclean animals** (really "pure" and "not pure") **reveals how Satan went about persuading all the angels under his leadership to join him**.

The category of unclean animals reveals why Satan was successful in persuading all of the angels

under his leadership to join him.

The category of clean animals reveals what all those angels should have done, to avoid being deceived by Satan into joining Satan in rebellion against God.

This is a case of understanding some of the invisible things by looking at the things that are made (Romans 1:20 again).

What did the angels under Satan's leadership do? When Satan began to incite dissatisfaction with the status quo, when Satan started planting seeds of rebellion against God in their minds, how did they deal with this? They dealt with Satan's suggestions to rebel against God **just like unclean animals**!

They **swallowed** Satan's devious ways of being critical of God hook, line and sinker ... just like some carnivorous animal selfishly devouring everything within its reach, and then selfishly guarding whatever it was unable to swallow right then. They embraced Satan's selfish attitude without any thoughts of the consequences ... like devouring a piece of flesh whole.

Whenever you see the symbolism of eating or devouring people in the Bible, think of the way carnivores devour their food. And then think of the demons with Satan. For example:

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary **the devil**, as **a roaring lion**, walks about, **seeking whom he may devour**: (1 Peter 5:8)

There is a generation, whose teeth *are as* swords, and their jaw teeth *as* knives, **to devour the poor** from off the earth, **and the needy** from *among* men. (Proverbs 30:14)

And I will appoint over them four kinds, says the LORD: **the sword to slay**, and **the dogs to tear**, and **the fowls** of the heaven, **and the beasts** of the earth, **to devour** and destroy. (Jeremiah 15:3)

When you read these verses, and dozens of others like them, then the picture is always one of unclean animals, carnivores, just greedily swallowing the flesh they have torn off their prey.

The way carnivores eat the meat of the animals they have killed typifies how demons think, how they use their minds ... selfishly, greedily, unconcerned with consequences.

And **that way of thinking** set up the demons to swallow all of Satan's efforts at getting them to join him in rebellion against God. Here is a principle which the way unclean animals eat should teach us:

It is always easier to persuade people who have a selfish motivation and a basically selfish attitude than it is to persuade people who do not have such a selfish attitude.

The reason is that a selfish approach to life inevitably impacts on everything we say and do. It impacts on how we evaluate all the information that is presented to our minds. In other words, a mind that is guided by a selfish attitude is incapable of evaluating all information objectively, if that information could in any way impact the life of the person with the selfish attitude.

This is something we should learn when we observe how carnivores eat.

Calling the demons "unclean spirits" tells us that they were persuaded by Satan to join Satan in rebelling against God because **these unclean spirits were thinking and reasoning selfishly**.

IF THEY HAD THOUGHT THE WAY CLEAN ANIMALS EAT

Now to avoid being deceived by Satan's appeals to rebel against God, these angels who became demons should have treated the ideas Satan presented to them like **the way that clean animals eat**.

Clean animals, like cattle and sheep, take in their food leisurely. They don't compete for food, and they don't chase other animals away to protect their specific piece of pasture. They don't eat selfishly, like carnivores do. And they eat very methodically.

If those angels under Satan's authority, after exposure to Satan's thoughts of rebelling against God, had treated those thoughts the way clean animals eat their food, then **they would not have been taken in** by Satan's persuasive appeals to selfishness.

Rather, after initial exposure to Satan's thoughts they would have "chewed the cud", i.e. deal with Satan's appeals to rebel against God by examining them at leisure from every possible angle, like chewing them over and over and over, objectively and without any selfish motivation.

They would have realized:

1) You, Satan, are appealing to us to think selfishly, to get us to develop a me-first attitude.

2) But your motivation in wanting us to think selfishly is really motivated by **your** desire to elevate **your** status. And you need us to help you become greater. And if we were to succeed in a rebellion against God, then **you** want to be the ruler over us, instead of God being that Ruler right now. So encouraging us to start thinking selfishly is motivated by **your selfish desire** to be elevated even higher than now. And we are just your pawns in that scheme.

3) You want us to become **totally ungrateful** to the God who has created us and given us life. We have been freely given an immortal existence, and you want still more. Why?

4) Your selfish desires have blinded you to the fact that **it is impossible for us to defeat the God** who created us. It can't be done. Just what do you think we could do to God ... kill Him?? So when we fight against God, what are we hoping to achieve, if we can't kill God or somehow banish God to some other place? Selfishness has destroyed your ability to think logically and soundly.

5) You, Satan, know as well as we do that **all power** (i.e. the holy spirit) emanates from God the Father and from Jesus Christ. We ourselves cannot generate the holy spirit, to replenish the power we have available to us right now. So without access to new supplies of power your rebellion will be doomed to failure. You don't recognize that God in an instant can make us powerless.

6) Satan, you also want us to reject our sense of loyalty to our Creator God. God has never at any time treated us badly or selfishly. God has blessed us, and God deserves our loyalty.

7) Satan, you also want us to become discontent with our present circumstances. But we are content right now, and that contentment allows us to enjoy our existence. We don't want to "trade" (see Ezekiel 28:16), because trading is a subtle way of getting us to think selfishly.

These are some of the thoughts those angels would very likely have come up with, **if they had "chewed the cud"** for hours and hours and hours. But they didn't "chew the cud". Instead they gulped down the selfish way of thinking Satan had presented to them.

SO WHY NOT EAT UNCLEAN MEATS?

Okay, so **why** does God not want us to eat any part of any unclean animal?

To understand the answer to this question, it is helpful to consider a parallel question. That question back at Paul's time was: why should we not eat meat sacrificed to idols?

Notice what the Apostle Paul said.

Now as **touching things offered unto idols**, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but charity edifies. (1 Corinthians 8:1)

Now when you read all of chapter 8, you get the distinct impression that an idol is not really a big deal.

As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, **we know that an idol *is* nothing in the world**, and that *there is* none other God but one. (1 Corinthians 8:4)

The conclusion you could draw from this is that therefore eating meat offered to idols isn't really a big deal, since the idol is really nothing. That impression is strengthened with Paul's statement:

But meat commends us not to God: for **neither, if we eat, are we the better**; **neither, if we eat not, are we the worse**. (1 Corinthians 8:8)

From this we could conclude that this whole question is not an issue one way or the other. Now notice Paul's reasoning in the next verse:

But take heed lest by any means **this liberty of yours** become a stumbling-block to them that are weak. (1 Corinthians 8:9)

Paul is saying that you have "the liberty" to eat meat offered to idols. But don't eat meat offered to idols if that might offend a weak brother. In other words, **you can eat it if you want to**, but just don't eat it if you are in the company of "a weak church member". The reason for not eating meat is not that "it is wrong to eat such meat". No, here the reason is "show some consideration for church members who have a weak conscience" (see verse 12). And then verse 13 says: don't eat meat sacrificed to idols to avoid offending a weak brother.

If you stop reading at the end of chapter 8, you are left with the impression: you can eat it if you want to, but don't eat it in the presence of a member with a weak conscience.

So would it be okay to "discreetly" eat meat sacrificed to idols? Is that what Paul is saying? You might be excused to think so if you stop reading there, since in the next chapter Paul addresses a different subject.

But Paul wasn't finished with talking about meat sacrificed to idols, and he comes back to this subject in chapter 10. Let's notice verse 19.

What say I then? that the idol is any thing, **or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing**? (1 Corinthians 10:19)

Paul has clearly come back to the subject of meat offered to idols. And **only now does he give us the real reason** why we should not eat meat sacrificed to idols. Notice:

But *I say*, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, **they sacrifice to demons**, and not to God: and **I would not that ye should have fellowship with demons**. (1 Corinthians 10:20)

So forget about all the conclusions you might have drawn from chapter 8. In chapter 8 Paul presented the way a technical mind might reason. And he showed that he understood that line of reasoning. Even a carnal unconverted mind would be able to follow the reasoning in chapter 8. And from a carnal reasoning point of view Paul left a certain amount of latitude with this question.

However, in chapter 10 Paul has switched to a line of reasoning that requires some spiritual understanding. And that spiritual line of reasoning is:

While those dumb idols are nothing, the real issue is not the idol, but what that idol represents. That idol represents **the world's way of seeking contact with demons**. For every idol that any people on earth have ever invented, there is a demon out there who holds "the title deed" to that idol's name. So any meat that is ever sacrificed to some idol is in actual fact sacrificed "to demons".

This line of reasoning is on a higher level than all the reasoning in chapter 8. But this line of reasoning requires a certain level of understanding. Now for anyone who can understand Paul's line of reasoning here, this matter of eating meat sacrificed to idols has just become a matter of "**seeking fellowship with demons**".

So what has this done to our chapter 8 conclusion that "eating meat sacrificed to idols is not a big deal one way or the other"? It has totally demolished that conclusion. Can you see that?

So now **the only possible conclusion** is: **don't eat meat sacrificed to idols**!

Here is what Paul has done. In chapter 8 he presented the physical reasoning based on arguing about the letter of the law. In chapter 10 he then focused on the spiritual intent of the law. He has made the whole question a totally different argument. Now the focus is: if you are really trying to do the things that are pleasing in God's eyes (see 1 John 3:22), then there is only one possible answer to this question. And that answer is: don't eat meat sacrificed to idols!

So much for meats offered to idols. Can you see the parallel that I am leading to?

I DON'T WANT YOU TO HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH DEMONS

The difference in the ways of eating between clean animals and all other animals represents the difference between how the minds of God's holy angels work, and how the minds of Satan and his demons work.

Yes, we don't eat meat from unclean animals because that is spelled out in Leviticus 11 and in Deuteronomy 14. But by far **the most important reason** why we are not to eat any part of any unclean animal is that we are not to have fellowship with demons. Paul's principle in 1 Corinthians 10:20 applies just as much to not eating unclean meat as it does to not eating meat sacrificed to idols.

Eating unclean meats represents having contact with demons!

Satan is the god of this age (2 Corinthians 4:4), meaning that Satan controls most human beings to a greater or smaller degree. And so most human beings also don't care about God's instructions regarding clean and unclean meats. Eating unclean meats amounts to rejecting God's rule over our

lives. And since the overwhelming majority of human beings reject God’s rule over their lives, it is only fitting that their rejection is graphically represented by them eating unclean meats. As I said earlier:

The world all around us lives by Genesis 9:3. **God’s people**, on the other hand, live by Leviticus chapter 11.

The world is on Satan’s wavelength, in tune with Satan’s way of thinking. They show where they stand by eating all kinds of unclean animals. God’s people reject Satan’s way of thinking, and God’s people show this by rejecting all unclean meat.

I am not minimizing the fact that eating unclean meats can cause any number of health problems. But then eating and drinking any number of "**not unclean**" **items** can also cause any number of health problems, and many people in God’s Church merrily eat and drink those things anyway, because those things are technically "not unclean". (You can figure out for yourself some of the items that fall into this "not unclean" category, and which are not really good for our health.)

Eating clean meats sends the message that we don’t gullibly swallow whatever information is presented to us. It sends the message that we "chew the cud" regarding the things people want us to do and to believe. Eating clean meats sends the message that we use our minds to evaluate all information.

Eating clean meat most certainly has God’s approval!

We need to understand that the main issue for clean and unclean meats is that **the way unclean animals consume their food represents the way Satan and the demons use their minds ... selfishly.** And we are not to eat unclean meats because God does not want us to have fellowship with demons.

Frank W Nelte

P.S.: If you really want another reason to not eat any part of a pig, then read the short Wikipedia article on "Pig toilet" regarding pigs eagerly eating human feces.