

THE
DIETARY
LAWS
OF THE
BIBLE

Vic Lockman

THE DIETARY LAWS OF THE BIBLE

by Vic Lockman

To my wife Jean,
who is always telling me
what to eat
and
what not to eat.

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INTRODUCTION

The Bible clearly places salvation beyond attainment by any manner of works-righteousness or law-keeping: “For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast” (Ep.2:8-9). Yet in the same breath we are told that: “we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them”(Ep.2:10).

Both salvation and good works are possible only because of the work of God the Holy Spirit within us: He regenerates our spiritually dead souls (Titus 3:5,6) and causes us to walk in His statutes (Ezek.36:25-27)-”It is God who works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure”(Phil.2:13).

Jesus made it clear that if we love Him we will keep His commandments (Jn.14:15), and His commandments are not burdensome (I Jn.5:3), and that this is of extended temporal duration: “Do not think that I have come to destroy the law or the prophets. I came not to destroy but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, Till heaven and earth pass away, not one jot or tittle shall in any way pass from the law until all is fulfilled. Therefore, whoever shall break one of these commandments, the least, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of Heaven, and whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven” (Mt.5:17-19).

This means that every single law of the Older Covenant continues to be valid and is intended to be obeyed

by the New Covenant church unless it is directly abrogated in the scriptures of the New Testament, implied by apostolic example, or by valid inference made obsolete. The book of Hebrews, in its many references to the Older Covenant form of worship, indicates that the former system composed of shadows and types of heavenly things, has been superseded by Christ the very object of that imagery, for He is "the Mediator of a better covenant"(Heb.8:6). The imagery, the ceremonies, the priesthood, and the temple itself all pointed ahead to the divine High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ. Hebrews 8:5, quoting Ex.25:40: "See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you in the mountain," tells us that those priests of old and the system in which they labored, which included the pattern of the tabernacle, served "as example and shadow of heavenly things." The writer goes on at length in this vein: "Now that which decays and becomes old is ready to vanish away"(8:13); the old tabernacle was until the time of reformation (9:1-10); these were expendable patterns of heavenly things (9:23); and the ceremonial law was a shadow of good things to come (10:1). Jesus Christ was the realization of all these images, having fulfilled them in His sinless life on earth, substitutionary blood atonement, bodily resurrection and ascension, and messianic reign over all creation from Heaven until the last day (He.10:10-13). Today the ceremonial laws of Israel are "out of gear," no longer observed on earth by man, but eternally exercised in heaven (He.7:25). In this way, and in this way alone, they have abiding validity (Mt.5:18).

“Out of gear” also are those laws of various particulars of Israel’s life as God’s covenant people, laws of territorial inheritance (Nu.34), now broadened for the New Israel of God to include the whole earth (Mt.5:5); the sign of covenant admission, circumcision, being replaced by baptism (Col.2:11 -12), and covenantal-life-maintenance, the Passover (Ex.12:1ff), being replaced by the Lord’s Supper (Lu.22:14-20; I Cor.5:7); and the special holy days and ceremonial sabbaths, being fulfilled by Christ and coalesced into ONE holy day, the Lord’s Day, which is the first day of the week (Jn.20:19) and patterned on the creation sabbath or day of rest (Gen.2:1-3), now a time-monument to Christ’s having established the new creation day of eternal rest for all those who rest in Him from their labors (He.4:9,10).

The Older Covenant gave way to the new at the cross in principle, and, as a practical matter, in 70 A.D. at the fall of Jerusalem which signaled an historic culmination of the Jewish kingdom with the destruction of the temple. And thus, there is a great divide of the old from the new.

It is the view of this book, contrary to popular belief and general ignorance, that while any ceremonial aspect there may have been to the dietary laws of the Old Testament has ceased with the demise of the nation Israel, those laws are still valid today for all men in all nations (and particularly for Christians), being an inseparable part of God’s creation-law-order. These dietary laws constitute God’s prescribed health-menu, and in the keeping of them is great reward; good health and longevity, all of which are effective in a more strenuous proclama-

tion of the Gospel and its resulting worldwide planting of His righteous kingdom.

Give it a hearing, and see if you won't agree that there stands a very formidable prima-facie case for the continuing validity and observation of the dietary laws today.

Here's to your health!

Vic Lockman, Yreka, Ca. 1997

PREFACE

This book has roots reaching back many years in my Christian life, to the time when I came under the teaching of R. J. Rushdoony for a period of four years as he was giving a series of lectures which were later to become published as **THE INSTITUTES OF BIBLICAL LAW, VOLUME I** (1973). His itemization of the health and dietary laws of the Old Testament, along with explanations of why certain things are or are not unhealthy was extremely enlightening. His simple and sound interpretation of Peter's vision in Acts X made it all too apparent that most Christians were badly mistaken in believing that the dietary laws were abrogated along with the ceremonial laws of Israel at the advent of the New Covenant era. Rushdoony's outline of the health laws organizes those precepts very logically, and below I have abbreviated his outline and combined some of its points.

1. The eating of blood is forbidden; the animal cannot be strangled; it must be bled (Lev. 17:10-14; 19:26; Ac. 15:20). Consumption of animal fats are also forbidden (Lev. 7:23,25).
2. Dead, unbutchered animals are forbidden fare (animals that die on their own- Deut. 14:21). Also forbidden is the flesh of any animal torn by wild beasts (Ex.22:31).
3. Most scavenger quadrupeds, birds, fish, and insects are prohibited, as well as scavenger organs which clear the body of impurities (Lev.3:9-11).
4. Carnivorous animals are forbidden food.

5. Herbivorous animals are allowed, unless they neither chew the cud nor divide the hoof (the horse). Also allowed are grain feeding birds.
6. Most insects, with the exception of certain (multi-stomached) locusts or grasshoppers are forbidden (Lev. 11:22; Mt. 3:4).
7. No legislation is given respecting fruits, grains, eggs, and vegetables; hence they are fit for human consumption, unless, in the case of animal products (eggs, milk, cheese), they are derived from unclean beasts. Mushrooms (fungi) are forbidden because they are not seed-bearing plants (Gen.1:29).
8. The terms of division are clean, common, and unclean, the latter flesh condemned as an abomination.
9. All foods and liquids left in uncovered vessels in the vicinity of a dying or dead person are forbidden (Nu. 19:14,15).
10. It is forbidden to boil a kid in its mother's milk (Ex. 23:19; 34:26; De.14:21).
11. Wine, in moderation, may be part of the diet (I Tim. 5:23).
12. Human waste is to be buried outside the camp (Deut. 23:12,13).
13. Quarantine (a means of isolating disease) is required (Nu. 5:2-4).

God so loved the natural world that he created it with its very own sanitation crew, the unclean animals, many of which dispose of dead carcasses, dung, and other

impurities. God loved mankind in that he gave us scientifically sound laws of sanitation, hygiene, and diet far in advance of man's own developing disciplines along these lines. Thousands of years before Pasteur, God instructed Israel in the ways of sanitation and health, so that even in the days of relatively primitive knowledge and medicine, these laws would go far along the path of preventive medicine and longevity. Yet, even in our own day, there are still cultures that disobey God's simple laws of health, to their own harm.

Secondly, I am indebted to the Rev. Elmer A. Josephson, whose book *GOD'S KEY TO HEALTH AND HAPPINESS* (1962), came into my hands shortly after my Rushdoony encounter. Mr. Josephson stated the whole concept in a very serious and loving way, and answered the questions of the critics. This was all encompassed in an evangelical approach.

I am also grateful to numerous other Christians, whose views, both pro and con on this subject, have had an influence on my thinking and apologetic method.

Recognizing that all things were made by, through, and for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, I credit Him, in whom reside all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, for what measure of truth is contained in this little book. I pray God's blessings on the contents of this book so far as they accurately reflect His will for our lives.

Go ahead now, imitate the faithful Bereans to see if these things are so.

-VIC LOCKMAN

PART I

THE DIETARY LAWS OF THE BIBLE

1

GOD'S DIETARY LAWS

Leviticus was the first book that Jewish children used to study in the Synagogue. Today it is more likely to occupy last place, or none at all, in the church's preference for reading or study. Regulations for sacrifice and uncleanness hold little interest for modern man. It is therefore not surprising that few moderns know anything of the dietary laws of Leviticus XI and Deuteronomy XIV. Hopefully, what follows in this book will revive a healthy interest in those ancient, but still very necessary laws of God.

LEVITICUS XI

- 1 And the LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying to them,**
- 2 Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, These are the animals which you shall eat among all the animals that are in the earth.**
- 3 Whatever divides the hoof, and is cloven-footed, chewing the cud, among the animals, that you shall eat.**
- 4 Only, you shall not eat these of them that chew the cud, or of them that divide the hoof: the camel, for he**

chews the cud but does not divide the hoof; he is unclean to you.

5 And the coney, because he chews the cud but does not divide the hoof; he is unclean to you.

6 And the hare, because he chews the cud but does not divide the hoof; he is unclean to you.

7 And the swine, though he divides the hoof and is cloven-footed, yet he does not chew the cud; he is unclean to you.

8 You shall not eat of their flesh, and you shall not touch their dead body. They are unclean to you.

9 These you shall eat of all that are in the waters: whatever has fins and scales in the waters, in the seas, and in the rivers, them you shall eat.

10 And all that have not fins and scales in the seas, and in the rivers, and all that move in the waters, and of any living thing that is in the waters, they shall be an abomination to you.

11 They shall even be an abomination to you. You shall not eat of their flesh, but you shall have their carcasses in abomination.

12 Whatever has no fins nor scales in the waters shall be an abomination to you.

13 And you shall have these in abomination among the fowls. They shall not be eaten, they are an abomination: the eagle, and the black vulture, and the bearded vulture,

**14 and the kite, and the falcon, according to its kind;
15 every raven according to its kind;**

16 and the ostrich, and the great owl, and the gull,

and small hawks,

17 and the little owl, and the cormorant, and the eared owl;

18 and the barn owl, and the pelican, and the owl-vulture;

19 and the stork, the heron according to its kind, and the hoopoe, and the bat.

20 Every flying swarming creature going on all four, it is an abomination to you.

21 Yet you may eat these of any flying swarming thing that goes on all four, those which have legs above their feet, to leap with on the earth.

22 You may eat these of them: the locust after its kind, and the bald locust after its kind, and the long horned locust after its kind, and the short horned grasshopper after its kind.

23 But every other flying swarming thing which has four feet shall be an abomination to you.

24 And you shall be unclean for these. Whoever touches their dead body shall be unclean until evening.

25 And whoever carries the carcass of them shall wash his clothes and be unclean until the evening;

26 even every living thing which divides the hoof, and is not cloven-footed, nor chews the cud, they are unclean to you. Everyone that touches them shall be unclean.

27 And whatever goes on its paws, among all the living things that go on all four, those are unclean to you. Whoever touches their dead body shall be unclean until the evening.

28 And he that carries their dead bodies shall wash his clothes and be unclean until the evening. They are unclean to you.

29 These also shall be unclean to you among the swarming things that swarm on the earth: the weasel, and the mouse, and the great lizard after its kind; **30** and the gecko, and the monitor, and the lizard, and the sand lizard, and the brown owl.

31 These are unclean to you among all that swarm. Whoever touches them when they are dead shall be unclean until the evening.

32 And whatever shall fall on any of them when they are dead, shall be unclean, whether any vessel of wood, or clothing, or skin, or sack; whatever vessel in which work is done, it must be put into water, and it shall be unclean to the evening. So it shall be cleaned.

33 And any earthen vessel in which any of them falls, whatever is in it shall be unclean. And you shall break it.

34 Of all food which may be eaten, that on which such water comes shall be unclean. And all drink that may be drunk in every such vessel shall be unclean.

35 And every thing on which any part of their dead body falls shall be unclean; whether it is the oven, or ranges for pots, they shall be broken down. They are unclean and shall be unclean to you.

36 But a fountain or pit, in which there is a collection of water, shall be clean. But that which touches their dead body shall be unclean.

37 And if any of their dead body falls on any sowing

seed which is to be sown, it shall be unclean.

38 But if any water is put on the seed, and any part of the dead body falls on it, it shall be unclean to you.

39 And if any animal among those you may eat dies, he that touches its dead body shall be unclean until the evening.

40 And he that eats of its dead body shall wash his clothes and be unclean until the evening. He also that carries its body shall wash his clothes and be unclean until the evening.

41 And every swarming thing that swarms on the earth shall be an abomination. It shall not be eaten.

42 Anything going on its belly, and any going on all four, and all having many feet, even every swarming thing that swarms on the earth, you shall not eat them. For they are an abomination.

43 You shall not defile yourselves with any swarming thing that swarms, neither shall you make yourselves unclean with them, so that you should be defiled by them.

44 For I am the LORD your God, and you shall sanctify yourselves, and you shall be holy, for I am holy. Neither shall you defile yourselves with any kind of swarming thing that swarms on the earth.

45 For I am the LORD who brings you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.

46 This is the law of the animals, and of the fowl, and of every living creature that moves in the waters, and of every creature that swarms on the earth,

47 to make a difference between the unclean and the clean, and between the beast that may be eaten and the beast that may not be eaten.

2

A "DIGEST" OF LEVITICUS XI

"The LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron"(vs.1), that is, He spoke to both the CIVIL and the ECCLESIASTICAL rulers in Israel. Here is an initial indication of the wholeness of life involved.

Jamieson, Fausset, & Brown, in their commentary, say that, "These laws, therefore, being subservient to sanitary as well as religious ends, were addressed to both Moses and Aaron." These commentators further discuss the unhealthy and diseased condition of many unclean animals, citing Whitlaw's Code of Health (pg.9). They note that animals which both chew the cud and part the hoof have been favored in most countries, though observed most carefully by the people who were favored with the promulgation of God's law. They identify the swine as a filthy, foul-feeding animal.

The dietary laws, standing first in the general precepts of clean and unclean, are, in accordance with the Hebrew division of the animal kingdom, listed under four main headings: (1) the quadrupeds, or land animals, (2) the water animals, (3) the birds of the air, and (4) the swarming things. These are pretty much classifications based on the habitat and general activity of the creatures. For instance, bats are found listed among birds. Modern

classifications are, of course, of different divisions and are further broken down into class, order, family, genus, and species, and these contain subdivisions as well.

The important division that cuts through all classes is that of clean and unclean. These distinctions, based on the physical and dining habits as well as the digestive systems of the animals, may be summarized as follows.

LAND ANIMALS: those that chew the cud (having a complex digestive system) and completely divide the hoof or foot (beneath as well as above) are clean. Those that have a simple digestive system and do not completely divide the hoof or foot, such as horses, are unclean.

WATER ANIMALS: those having both fins and scales are clean. It is overlapping scales that qualify and not separated or spiny plates or ridges that leave the skin exposed. All else are declared unclean.

BIRDS OF THE AIR: those not prohibited are the grain eating birds, and those listed as forbidden are carnivorous birds of prey and scavengers.

SWARMING THINGS: this is a large collection of various creatures, such as insects, small rodents, reptiles, etc., and they are identified by name rather than physical characteristics. Swarmers are to be found on land, in the sea, and in the air. Mostly these are unclean. A surprising exception is four kinds of locust or grasshopper (vs.21-23), which incidentally, have a complex diges-

tive system.

In general, it may be said that the unclean animals are those which are in direct contact with their environment and the parasites therein (paws, no scales, etc.), possessing a simple digestive system that works rapidly and does not break down the food very well, and those creatures which are scavengers or beasts of prey.

The book of Leviticus continues to discuss uncleanness in other areas of life; childbirth (Chapter 12), diseases (chapter 13), and body-discharges, none of which are subjects of this study. They are all in the context of ceremonial uncleanness as a barrier to communion with God, but like the dietary laws, they have their roots in the real world of pollution. Keil and Delitzch's Old Testament Commentary ruminates further along these lines, saying, "Ceremonially, all of these things reminded men that in all the processes of life—generation, birth, eating, disease, and death—how everything, even his own bodily nature, lies under the curse of sin (Gen. 3:14-19), so that the law might serve as a schoolmaster to bring men to Christ."

While denying the undergirding of the dietary laws for any sanitary reasons, Keil and Delitzch nonetheless cannot help but discern their real-world connection: "...the Mosaic law followed the marks laid down by tradition, which took its rise in the primeval age, whose childlike mind, acute perception, and deep intuitive insight into nature generally, discerned more truly and essentially the real nature of the animal creation than we shall ever be able to do, with thoughts and perceptions

disturbed as ours are by the influences of unnatural and ungodly culture.” And then in another place: “Hence in all the nations and in all the religions of antiquity we find that contrast between clean and unclean, which was developed in a dualistic form, it is true, in many of the religious systems, but had its primary root in the corruption that had entered the world through sin.”

Keil also observes that: “All animals are unclean which bear the image of sin, of death and corruption...of winged creatures not only birds of prey...but also marsh birds and others, which live on worms, carrion, and all sorts of impurities” (Keil, *Biblical Archeology II*, pp.118ff).

Even the world’s greatest biblical scholars, while denying that any sanitation or health reasons are the basis for the dietary laws, cannot help but expose their own gut-feelings about the unclean creatures in such verbiage as quoted above. Man cannot, in a sense, help but bear witness to the stark realities of the world about him. He argues against himself at points, as we have seen, because God speaks so loudly through natural revelation at times that He drowns out the wisdom of man’s intellect.

Finally, we need to recognize and take to heart the wholeness that underlies God’s creation, as the very word “universe” indicates. There are three spheres in the world; atmosphere, land, and sea, and each is populated with both clean and unclean creatures, all of whom are expected to obey the law of God in its normative provisions, but with certain lower-creature circumscriptions,

of course. Both man and his beast must keep the Sabbath, for example (Ex.20:10). The ox that gores a man must be put to death (Ex. 21:28). Killer-animals, by drawing blood, are also doomed to having their own blood drawn by beasts stronger than themselves. The death penalty among beasts! Those that eat blood have their blood eaten. Those that eat putrefying flesh, rife with parasites and plagues, may also expect to be devoured by those same internally infernal ugly-wiggles.

As for man, God demands total commitment, this being the essence of covenantal faith. No dark corner of man's life lies outside the pale of the covenant...it is a covenant of holy wholeness!

“Therefore you shall **KEEP ALL THE COMMANDMENTS** which I command you today, so that you may be strong and go in and possess the land where you go to possess it, and so that you may **MAKE YOUR DAYS LONGER** in the land which the **LORD** swore to your fathers to give to them and to their seed a land that flows with milk and honey” (emphasis added).

Deuteronomy 11:8,9