**LAW OF CLEAN AND UNCLEAN**

as taught at Midwest Bible College

**BIBLE DOCTRINE ARTICLE #18**

No. 1

Statement of Belief:

“God’s people are to use for food only those animals, birds, and fishes which were given by Him for that purpose, as distinguished from those designated in the Bible as unclean for Human use.” (Doctrinal Beliefs of the Church of God (7th Day) Article #18)

PART I - CLEAN AND UNCLEAN LAW BEFORE THE LAW OF MOSES

A. The Law Known by Noah

1. In what case do we first find mention of the Law of Clean and Unclean?

Genesis 7:2, 3, 8

2. What did Noah do as noted in Genesis 8:20? Does this action or text identify the  
 purpose of the Law of Clean and Unclean for that dispensation? Why?

3. What is the teaching of Genesis 9:1-3? Note Genesis 1:29, 30

B. Patriarchal Example

1. How does the example of the men of God in the Patriarchal age illustrate the  
 observance of the Law of Clean and Unclean?

2. Find and list all examples of the eating of meat before Moses’ Law. Identify what was eaten in each case.

C. Absence of Identification

1. Compare the identification of the Law of Clean and Unclean with that of the Ten  
 Commandments for this (Patriarchal) age.

2. Where are the listings of each first found? Why?

PART II - CLEAN AND UNCLEAN LAW UNDER THE LEVITICAL SYSTEM

A. Identification

1. What chapters in the Bible deal with the identification the clean and unclean?

2. For each of the following categories of life, give the regulations governing what is  
 clean and what is unclean?

a. Animals: Leviticus 11:2-8, 26 and Deuteronomy 14:6

b. Birds: Leviticus 11:13-19

c. Sea Life: Leviticus 11:9-12

d. Insects: Leviticus 11:20-23

3. What difference does the Bible give when it compares the results of eating unclean  
 meats or just touching their carcasses?

a. Leviticus 11:9, 11, 12, 13, 20, 23, 41

b. Leviticus 11:24-31

c. Leviticus 11:43

B. Purpose

1. Why did God give the Law of Clean and Unclean?

a. Leviticus 11:43-47 and Leviticus 20:22-26

b. What was the Law of Clean and Unclean a sign of?

c. What else was and is a sign as given in Exodus 31:17?

d. How may 2 Corinthians 6:17 apply to this thought?

C. Origin

1. Note: Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14 are the only chapters in the Bible that give identification to the Law of Clean and Unclean. These chapters are in the books of the Law of Moses but they do not indicate the origin of this law. The law has its origin before the Law of Moses and continues after the Law of Moses. The identification given in Leviticus and Deuteronomy applies to all parts of the Bible.

2. The below chart illustrates the above note.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| LAW OF CLEAN & UNCLEAN | | |
| BEFORE LEVITICAL SYSTEM SYSTEM SYSTEM SYSTEM: | UNDER LEVITICAL SYSTEM | AFTER LEVITICAL SYSTEM |
| OBSERVED  Genesis 18:6-8  Genesis 25:28  Genesis 27:1-4  Genesis 27:6-17  Exodus 12:3-10  Exodus 16:13  KNOWN  Genesis 7:2, 3, 8  Genesis 9:1-3 | LAW GIVEN  Leviticus 11  Deuteronomy 14  TO BE OBSERVED  Leviticus 11:43-47  Leviticus 20:24-27 | TO BE OBSERVED  2 Corinthians 6:17  1 Timothy 4:1-3  Revelation 18:2  TAUGHT IN FUTURE  PROPHECY  Isaiah 52:11  Isaiah 66:15-17 |

PART III - CLEAN AND UNCLEAN LAW IN THE NEW SCRIPTURES

A. The Teachings of Jesus

1. Where did Jesus go? What did He do while there and what did His actions indicate?  
 Matthew 8:32-38

a. Why is this weak as far as support is concerned?

2. How did Jesus illustrate the very low place to which the prodigal son had come?  
 Luke 15:14-16

B. Teachings in the writings of the Apostles and Prophets

1. Explain why Acts 10 and 11 are very strong texts against the eating of unclean meats  
 for this dispensation.

a. Notice the significance of the types of animals that were on the sheet. Acts 10:12

b. Notice the significance of Peter’s statement found in Acts 10:14.

c. Note the significance of God’s answer found in Acts 10:15.

d. What is the message that God intended to teach with Acts 10?

(Notice Acts 10:28, 34, 35.)

e. What is the difference in “common” and “unclean” animals?

2. What is the message of Isaiah 52:11 and how does Paul relate this message to  
 Christians in 2 Corinthians 6:17, 18?

3. List three points from 1 Timothy 4:3-5 that make the text support observance of the  
 Law of Clean and Unclean.

4. According to Revelation 18:2, what will exist at the time of the fall of Babylon and the  
 second coming of Christ?

5. What time is spoken of in Isaiah 66:15-17? List the sequence of events for the entire  
 chapter.

6. Note: One of the strongest points in favor of strict observance of the Law of Clean and  
 Unclean is that the Scripture does not give a nullification of that Law.

PART IV - Answers to Claims of Nullification

A. For each of the following texts, show how they, in truth, do not nullify the Law of Clean and  
 Unclean.

1. Acts 10:12, 13, 15

2. 1 Timothy 4:3-5

3. Romans 14:1-3

4. Romans 14:14

5. Matthew 15:1-20

6. Mark 7:19

7. Luke 10:7, 8

8. Colossians 2:16

9. 1 Corinthians 8:8 and 10:25

10. Genesis 9:1-3

PART V - CONCLUSION

A. NOTE: God from the beginning of time made a distinction between the animals. Some were declared as clean and some unclean. Since the time man was permitted to eat flesh those that were declared unclean were not to be eaten by the children of God. This is held in part because of the below principles:

1. Noah knew the difference between the clean and unclean animals.  
(Genesis 7:2, 3, 8)

2. There is no Biblical record of any unclean animals being eaten.  
(Genesis 18:6-8; 25:28; 27:1-4; 27:6-17; Exodus 12:3-10; Exodus 16:13)

3. Animals not eaten prior to the flood, but given as the green herb after the flood. (Genesis 9:3)

4. God’s people were to be set apart and a separate people. (Leviticus 20:23-26)

5. The Law of Clean and Unclean did not originate as a Law of Moses although the definition of what is clean and unclean is recorded in the books containing the Law of Moses.

6. Peter recognized the Law of the Clean and Unclean. (Acts 10:14)

7. Observance taught by the Apostle Paul. (2 Corinthians 6:17; 1 Timothy 4:1-3)

8. Those guilty of eating the unclean things will be consumed at the second advent of Christ. (Isaiah 52:11; Isaiah 66:15-17)

**No. 2**

**THE “CLEAN” and “UNCLEAN” MEAT QUESTION**

This subject has been a matter of discussion among certain people for years. Some texts of Scripture seem to lean one way and some seem to lean another way. Informed Christians know that under the Old Covenant God’s people were plainly told not to eat meat (animal flesh) the Lord specified as “unclean” for food. In the days of grace, under the New Covenant, is there any item of food forbidden?

“For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Romans 14:17). Paul also wrote that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean” (Verse 14).

Are the above quotations to be taken as “cover-all” or “blanket” statements, settling the matter sufficiently to stop here? Is that all there is to the questions at hand? Is it true that those who believe there is still some forbidden food, or things people eat today that should not be eaten according to the Bible, are mistaken in their view­point? Have they no “leg” to stand on?

One more quote before coming to grips with some other points to consider. Jesus said: “Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man” (Matthew 15:11). Is that another “blanket” statement? The question that prompted the Master to say what He did was, “Why do thy disciples transgress the traditions of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread.” This was none other than a “tradition of the Jews,” one of their own making, and at best was only ceremonial. The question of unclean food (unclean meat included) was not at stake here. In conclusion our Saviour said, “…but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.” If we leave Jesus’ statements with the “context” in Matthew 15, we should have no problem. If we apply it out of context and make it fit everything mankind uses for food we see that that makes our Saviour contradict the Holy Spirit, which I shall prove. That is, the Master didn’t say we may put in our mouths whatever we desire to and it is all right. In Matthew 15 He was opposing Jewish tradition.

Acts 15 records where numerous brethren came together to settle a dispute concerning circumcision and other matters. The record does not show that there was any discussion concerning clean and unclean meat, in reference to Leviticus 11. In concluding this conference, settling the matter under discussion that needed attention, note these three things the believers were to abstain from: 1. “meats offered to idols”; 2. “and from blood”; 3. “and from things strangled.” (Fornication was a “no, no”.) Please note that the Holy Spirit concurred with the above (Verse 28).

Since we believe that Christ was always in harmony with the Holy Spirit and therefore did not contradict the decision arrived at, at that conference, therefore we are forced to say that His statements in Matthew 15 were not “blanket” statements, but rather dealt with “tradition of the elders” a ceremonial idea and not Scripture.

Furthermore, neither the Jews nor the Disciples at that time understood Jesus’ statements in Matthew 15 to mean that, for example, the pig or swine’s flesh was from that moment okay to eat, which was before the Cross when types and shadows came to an end. Incidentally, the pig was not a type or shadow of anything pointing to Christ. Had the Jews thought Christ meant to cleanse the pig (which was an abomination to them) by statements quoted above, surely they could have easily aroused thousands of religious followers to run Him out of the country if possible, since they were desperately looking for something to hold against Him. They didn’t misapply Matthew 15 as some do.

Before a few more thoughts related to Matthew 15, what about, “there is nothing unclean of itself”? Those who do not believe that when our Saviour died to cleanse sinners that His shed blood also cleansed the pig, do not say that that animal is unclean for food because it wallows in mud and mire. The pig did not make itself unclean. The Almighty, by His own decision, by His own word simply said it was unclean for food. Many doctors and food experts, not persuaded by the pork industry, know and state that swine’s flesh is not a good food item, possibly not even knowing what the Bible says about the pig.

As for Peter’s vision in Acts 10, does that contradict what has already been written in this article? In his vision he saw “all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth…” That takes in both the clean and the unclean animals. Peter was told to “kill and eat.”· There were clean animals in the group. Were they defiled? Peter replied, “I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.” “Never?” Didn’t Jesus cleanse the pig years before that in Matthew 15? No, He didn’t. Was Peter the only disciple that particular? Did the others disagree with Him?

Nothing in Acts 10 tells us that Peter was told that unclean animals (foodwise) were now good to eat. The voice Peter heard said, “What God hath cleansed, that call thou not common.” Note that “What” (or whatever) “God hath cleansed” does not mean He had cleansed the pig. Peter was puzzled at first. He didn’t make a misapplication of the vision. At least one version of the New Testament uses the word “defiled” in place of “common.” The Jews considered the Gentiles a defiled people, not fit to associate with. The word “common” has this meaning (at least in part) “inferior quality; mean; low; having no rank.” The Jews felt they had little or nothing in common with the Gentiles.

Peter soon got the point of the vision, and did not go beyond it. He said, “Ye know that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or to come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call (any animal? No) any man common or unclean.” Also, “Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons;…” Shall we stay with Peter’s understanding of this vision or shall we venture beyond it with added interpretation unwarranted by the Bible?

Referring to Matthew 15 again, if our Saviour meant that all former animals considered unclean were okay to eat, and that anything one puts into his mouth is okay, it is easy to see where that leads. Isn’t that the interpretation preferred by the alcoholics, drug users, winebibbers, and tobacco addicts?

First Timothy 4 speaks of “meats (foods) which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.” The truth is, some animals were never created to be eaten. Before Old Covenant times Noah knew which animals were called “unclean.” Swine is listed in Leviticus 11 as an “abomination” to God’s people. Our prayers cannot sanctify that which the Bible doesn’t, but calls such an “abomination.” What about “nothing to be refused”? Shall we then eat blood pudding? May we use that phrase to contradict Acts 15:28, 29? May we not refuse to eat meat infested with the trichina nematode?

Isaiah 66:15 speaks of the Lord’s coming, Verse 17 mentions those “eating swine’s flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the Lord.” Paul wrote that we are to be a separated people “…and touch not the unclean thing.” (II Corinthians 6:17) Therefore, to be on the safe side let us follow our Master, for He ate no unclean meat; and Peter’s example is also good (Acts 10:14).