

# The Dietary Laws

by Brad Scott

## Introduction

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I have decided to take some time to talk about an issue not addressed very often in the western church. One reason is that the whole subject of foods is considered obsolete and irrelevant to the modern church. It is seen by modern theologians as a command only to the Israel of long ago. To a dark, fuzzy, foggy, past, when God looked like the painting on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. Back when they needed THOSE kind of laws in order to please the angry demiurge and satisfy his spiteful whims. Food laws were given to an ignorant Israel which did not have the advantage or knowledge of modern food processing and enriched bread. To a nation that obviously had a different digestive system. To an inferior race of people with less than adequate physical properties. Who were lazy workers and needed a day off every week. A nation of wine bibbers and gluttons separated from the rest of humanity lest they contaminate us. Heil Hitler! I'm sorry. I got a little carried away.

I am hoping that with some knowledge of the past lessons we can move on to why God's instructions for our health are so vital and, yes, contemporary. But there is, by reason of our cultural training, a need to address a few New Testament scriptures that have been twisted to allegedly teach that Y'shua died on the cross to end the dietary laws. Does that not already sound absurd? I believe this is a very important subject, as our health affects virtually every area of our life. We need to decide now whether our diet is to be managed by cultural dictates and whims or by our Creator. I plan to spend a great deal of time on the 11th chapter of Vayikra (Leviticus), what it means to us and how we can apply these often misunderstood instructions to our lives right now.

We are going to begin by addressing a few of the most popular verses used by those who teach that God's dietary instructions have been done away with. Let's start with the words of Y'shua.

Mark 7:1-23

*"Then came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, who came from Jerusalem. And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashed hands, they found fault. For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash*

*their hands often, eat not, holding the traditions of the elders. And when they come from the market place, expect they wash, they eat not. And many other things there are, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, bronze vessels and of tables. Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands? He answered and said unto them, Well hath Isaiah prophesied of you HYPOCRITES, as it is written, This people honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. However, in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups; and many other such things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. For Moses said, Honor thy father and mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death ... And when he had called all the people unto him, he said unto them, Harken unto me, every one of you, and understand: There is nothing from outside of a man that, entering into him, can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear. And when he was entered into the house from the people, his disciples asked him concerning the parable. And he said unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatever thing from outside entereth into the man, it cannot defile him; Because it entereth not unto his heart, but into the stomach, and goeth out into the draught, purging all FOODS? And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, and evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and defile the man."*

Whew! That is quite a mouthful. Well, this is a classic example of how backwards interpreting is applied by modern day thinkers. Instead of going back to the foundation of New Testament words, the Old Testament, modern day commentators apply what we are practicing today and take that back to this text. Jesus said, they say, that NOTHING you put in your mouth can defile you, and that ALL things are now clean when they enter your stomach. And how do we know this? Because we are eating ALL things today! Well let us go back to the dictionary of the New Testament and see if this is Biblical. There are two things we will define. Remember that the testimony of the Book of Acts is that all teaching and sermons by the Jewish disciples were weighed against the testimony of the Old Testament (Acts 17:11).

## **THE WASHING OF HANDS**

This is not specifically defined in the Old Testament because it is part of the "fence" that the ancient sages had placed around Torah. The Pharisees continued in the tradition of upholding this fence which was originally intended to protect or "keep" God's words from being changed or perverted by the pagan nations. But as it is with most things "man" sets out to do, it became a yoke that no man could bear. The washing of hands is not a reference to our cleansing of hands to rid them of germs. That is just common sense. Y'shua was referring to the unbiblical ceremonial *Al netilat yadayim*, ritual washing of hands and utensils. The Pharisees and scribes taught that if you did not run flowing water over each hand, one at a time, and over the pots and cups then you were ceremonially defiled and when you touched the food it was also defiled. These same men were focusing on ritual uncleanness and ignoring the weightier matters of Torah or God's commandments. The scribes had a special two-handled bowl that was used to pour clean water over each hand without touching the bowl. This would make the food clean as well. By spending inordinate amounts of attention on these unbiblical rituals, they were neglecting their fathers and mothers. These Pharisees were NOT obeying the commandments of God, as they were described by the prophet Isaiah. If their hearts were right with God then they would have obeyed His words and not drifted off into unbiblical traditions. Sound familiar?

## FOODS

This term is clearly defined for the New Testament reader in the book of Vayikra (Leviticus) chapter 11. This chapter defines, by sight, what is clean to eat and what is not. The word for food and the word for eat are essentially the same words. The word for food is *okel* and the root of this word is *akal*, which is the word for "eat". Why is that? Because the things you are to eat is called "food". It is here, in Vayikra, that we have defined for us what is food. The things which we are to put in our mouth to eat is called food. Fourteen times in this chapter we are told what is UNCLEAN for you. What is NOT food. What is NOT to be eaten. A RAT is not food for you. An EAGLE is not food for you. A CAT is not food for you. A SWINE is not food for you. They are unclean FOR YOU. A pig is not unclean to another pig. A pig is not unclean to a hungry bear. It is not unclean of itself. It is only unclean FOR YOU, it is written. Read this chapter several times. Food, as previously defined by God, is that which we can eat. So things we put in our mouth to eat is already defined by God. This would have been understood by Y'shua's audience.

Now back to the text. The Pharisees are placing the ritual of washing

hands over the commandments of God. They teach that Y'shua's disciples have neglected this ritual and therefore are preparing to eat a meal with defiled hands, which would in turn defile the meal. Y'shua teaches them a basic course in anatomy. He reminds them that whatever things they put in their mouth will not defile them. What are they about to put in their mouths? FOOD! When food is eaten, the design of the digestive system separates the nutrients and life essential vitamins from the fiber and bulk. These nutrients are sent to the blood stream and distributed to cells to give life and growth to our bodies. The rest of the food is then sent out into the draught. (Let's not get into this.) So food not ritually clean does not defile you, for our digestive system is designed to purge food. Our digestive system, however, is not designed to purify things that are not food. Uranium would be a good example. Rocks, bolts and eating utensils would be another. So when Y'shua says "whatever things" he must not be talking about EVERY thing! The context is food. Defiled food. How can you conclude that Y'shua is teaching that he has now made all unclean things clean! Y'shua is teaching that it is not the ritual of the washing of hands that defiled a man, but rather the things that are coming out of their hearts that defile them. Food does not go to the heart but rather to the stomach and is separated by the digestive system.

Someday we will figure out that God knows ahead of time what He is talking about. Someday we will figure out that our stomach is not designed to purify a lot of the things we stick in our mouths. Some of my Christian friends remind me of my children when they were about 9 months old. Crawling around on the carpet with their little heads bobbing back and forth putting anything and everything into their mouths. We always wondered why they seem to be sick so often. The doctor told us it was just something going around.

Next time we will tackle Peter's vision of the sheet. I think you will find this one equally amusing.

## **Part 2**

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Perhaps one of the most oft quoted texts to "prove" that the dietary laws are not for the church is in Acts chapter 10, Peter's vision of the sheet. This is one of the most amazing scripture transformations I have ever experienced, and an excellent example of backwards interpreting. Backwards interpreting, simply put, means to use the New Testament to prove the validity of the Old Testament or to use our modern "Christian" traditions to validate the New Testament. All the testimony of the early "Church" witnessed to the fact that all New

Testament sermons were validated by comparing them to the teaching of the Old Testament, not the other way around. The text in Acts is a good example. First, we look at what we are doing today. Today we eat whatever we want. Then we read the New Testament. We read that Peter had a vision in which the angel tells Peter to rise and eat all these clean and unclean animals. Conclusion? God bagged all the Old Testament dietary laws. How do we know that? Well that's what we are doing today! The same logic is used to prove that the early church met on Sunday, or that the Lord's supper was once a week or every 3rd Sunday! But is this what the book of Acts teaches? Let us take a look.

In Acts chapter 10 verses 1-8 we have the account of a gentile named Cornelius of the Italian band. Cornelius was called a devout man or a *charediy* in the Hebrew. This was one who made himself dedicated to Torah. He was also described as one that "feared" God. This was known as a *ger toshav* or one who sits at the gate. This was a term given to gentile converts who were zealous for the God of Israel, but were not yet ready to take on the yoke of the kingdom. There will be more on this in later lessons. Cornelius was told in a vision about the ninth hour ( between the sixth and ninth hour was the *minchah* or afternoon prayer time) to send for Peter. So he sends two servants to fetch Peter, so to speak. Peter, in verse 9, about the sixth hour, again the beginning of afternoon prayer, is hungry and falls into a trance. The Holy Spirit shows him a vision of heaven opening and a sheet knit at the four corners being lowered down to earth. This sheet contains a mixture of clean and unclean animals. A voice speaks to him in the vision and says to rise, kill and eat. Peter responds naturally. "Not so my Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean." These are two different concepts biblically. The voice speaks again and tells Peter what God has cleansed do not call common. The vision is repeated three times. In verse 17, Peter is perplexed! What does this mean? Well for modern Christian scholars this is a no-brainer. He is telling Peter he can eat whatever he wants now, and Peter is scripturally incompetent. He can not figure it out. "Why would the Lord tell me to do something like this", he must have been saying to himself. In verse 19 the Spirit says to Peter that three men seek him and to trust God for He has sent them. In verse 22 Peter is informed that a gentile, of all people, has sent for him. Between verses 22 and 28 Peter figures out what the vision was all about. Ordinarily Peter would not have gone to this man for he was a gentile and unclean in Peter's eyes. Verse 28 sums up the entire episode. "*And he said unto them, Ye know that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but **God hath shown me that I should not call any***

*man common or unclean.* "How much clearer can God be? The purpose of the vision was to teach Peter about what God is doing among the gentiles now. This has nothing to do with changes to what is good to eat and what is not. This has nothing to do with dietary laws being done away with. In chapter 11 Peter retells this vision. In verse 17 and 18 he concludes again, *"Forasmuch, then, as God gave them the same gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I, that I could withstand God? When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."*

So you see, the Ruach HaQodesh is showing Kefa (Peter) that he is bringing gentiles into the body of Messiah by trusting just like the Jews. No longer is conversion accomplished by or through the temple or animal sacrifices. Gentiles who trust are now one with HaShem and are no longer unclean or common. Kefa did not rise and eat nor did he explain the purpose of the vision as teaching such a thing. Why, theologically, would something not created to be eaten, suddenly because of Yeshua's sacrifice, be alright to eat? Yeshua died and rose to free us from the penalty of sin, not to free us from the laws that reveal our sin.

1 Timothy 4:1-5 has also been used to teach that everything is alright to swallow and digest as long as you pray over it first. First of all, this is cultic thinking to begin with. Sha'ul dealt with this kind of thinking in Corinth. The spirit world was supposed to have a profound effect upon food. The whole idea of contacting a higher power through prayer to change or manipulate the instructions of God is abominable at best. Verse one of chapter four begins with Sha'ul warning us about the latter days which had begun already according to Kefa in his first sermon in Acts. There were dozens of gnostic type cultic doctrines being taught. The cults taught that denying yourself in various ways pleased God or the gods. This would eventually lead to the monastic way of life. Many of these teachers would speak of denial and then partake of that which they denied anyway. This is why Sha'ul tells us that they speak lies in hypocrisy. They forbid marriage, as marriage would defile the body and divert the focus of attention from the deities. Many were teaching what we today would call vegetarianism, the abstaining from meat in particular. Animals were held in high esteem, and one would slowly become one by eating the flesh of anything that once lived and breathed. In verse 3 Sha'ul mentions this and reminds them that God created these "foods" to be received with thanksgiving. Every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused, if it is received with thanksgiving. Let me remind you what the word of

God defines as foods and what is not food. This was discussed in part one. This is why Sha'ul reminds us what the subject is, the abstaining of certain "foods" for spiritual reasons. When Sha'ul says that "every" creature is good and not to be refused i.e. for eating purposes, he is not speaking of inedible objects. Bats, cats, spiders, dogs, and other humans are still not FOOD! ALL of God's creation is good, but not all of God's creation is FOOD. Those creatures that are to be for food are sanctified or separated out, by God in His word in verse 5. It is those who trust and know the truth that know these things. These verses are not talking about the dietary laws or even things "Jewish" as is sometimes taught. Forbidding to marry? Marriage is the foundation of Judaism! Forbidding to marry is not a precept of Judaism. We have many new age cults today practicing this same ritual. There are many in the organization called PETA, that call for this kind of lifestyle.

I hold and will continue to hold that God's words are eternal and are never antiquated or obsolete. It has, since the time of Adam, been in man's base nature to rebel and defy God's instructions. Some defy Him by simply not acknowledging Him. Others defy Him in His name. And still others cling to Him as if He were really a Father. Which one are you?

### **Part 3**

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I am always constantly amazed when I search out modern Christian commentaries concerning the subject of food or diet. Rarely, and I do mean rarely, is the background of the controversy ever consulted. We have discussed before that much of what Sha'ul says is assumed and not explained in the text. Phrases like: letter of the law, in the spirit, the old man, in the flesh, the cup of blessing, sons of light, fulfilled, hidden with Christ, the middle wall of partition, adoption, and hundreds of others are already understood by Sha'ul's audience. So it is with Romans chapter 14. Sha'ul uses several terms here that are not defined in the text. Much of what he says here he already taught in Corinth, and the context is similar.

In 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 Sha'ul is dealing with young, immature believers who are seeing more mature believers eating FOODS offered to idols at the market place. The older believers are not eating unclean things, they are eating FOOD offered to idols. The subject, as usual, is not an issue of a change in what God has declared unclean to eat. The subject is FOOD offered to idols and causing a

WEAKER brother to stumble at this. Sh'aul explains that idols are nothing, i.e. they are impotent, and that the food is not changed by the offering. If a weaker brother sees this and does not understand, then their conscience can be wounded or damaged. The FOODS that are mentioned here are FOODS that have been offered to pagan gods and then sold at the market place. Weaker brothers would see these FOODS being bought and were concerned that the brethren were being cursed and defiled by these foods, and so we are immediately reminded of what Yeshua said about someone being defiled by eating FOOD. We have already defined from the Old Testament what FOOD is. Sha'ul recommends that if a weaker brother is offended by this, then it is better not to eat these FOODS. There is no defining of what a WEAK brother is, or any reference to the dietary instructions.

In 1 Corinthians 8:9 Sha'ul says, "*But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to them that are weak*". What liberty is he talking about? In context these are more mature believers who have been set free from their old or previous life. To sacrifice and partake of FOODS offered to idols was believed to be taking on the nature of the idols and becoming one with them and bound to servitude. These older or stronger believers were not sacrificing to the gods, for they are now serving the one true God, which Sha'ul reminds them of in verses 5 and 6. The FOOD they are buying in the market place is just FOOD. The weaker brothers however, have not this knowledge (vs. 7) and when they eat they still eat as if they were offering to idols. The ones who have liberty are not those who have been freed from obeying the one true God! They have been freed from their pagan practices, and the weaker brothers are those who have not come to that knowledge yet.

Before we address the context and background of Romans 14, let's define some of the words. What we are going to address is the fact that **most modern Christian commentators define a weak brother as one who is still struggling to obey the commandments of God. The strong brother is one who, through Christ, has been set free from these burdens.** This is how they are defined today and this is what is brought back into the Romans text. But is this what the scriptures teach? We know from the record of the gospels that Yeshua obeyed His Father perfectly. He lived His life according to Torah and observed all of the Lord's feasts and sabbaths. According to modern definitions, Yeshua was weak in the faith. We know from the accounts of the early disciples in the book of Acts, that Sha'ul, Kefa, Yochanan, and Ya'akov were still faithful to Torah and observing the feasts and sabbaths of the Lord. Were these weak in



the faith? The gospel, according to Romans 1:16, went to the Jew first and then to the Greek. Was this order given so that the gospel would begin with the weak in the faith? Are we to believe that Moshe, Avraham, David, Elijah, or Daniel were all weak in the faith? I believe that this doctrine has its roots in the erroneous teaching that faith is simply an intellectual assent to certain propositions ABOUT God and not in trusting God. I believe this teaching has led to its natural conclusion: that the evidence of a "new life" is comprehending this new found freedom from obedience to God. The more that one does what is right in his own eyes, the stronger and more mature the believer is. The strong in the Lord are those who are now made free from God's demands. Oh really!

### **Weak in the Faith**

So what does it mean to be "weak in the faith"? We have already defined the word "faith" in previous lessons. I would suggest that you might want to go back and reread that lesson when you get an opportunity. The word "weak" comes from the greek word *astheneo*. This word is translated in the Brit Chadashah as weak, sick, disease, or without strength (Mattityahu 10:8, Yochanan 6:2, 1 Corinthians 2:3, Romans 15:1). This word describes one who is without, or lacking, whether physical or spiritual. This Greek word, of course, is taken from several Hebrew words in the LXX. The most used word, however, is the word *raphah*. To some of you this word may be very familiar. One of the Lord's titles is YHVH RAPHAH, or the Lord who heals. These words are cognates, that is, they are related to each other. The word *raphah* means to be sick, diseased, weak, or feeble. It is very interesting and typical that virtually the same word that means sickness is the same word "to heal". This concept was understood by the physician Maimonides, which led to the vaccines used today. It was discovered many years ago that some diseases can be cured by actually giving the victim the disease. This, of course, is how you and I are delivered from sin. Yeshua had to actually become sin for us in order to heal us (2 Corinthians 5:21). Is that not awesome?

In Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 6:24 we have a typical use of the word for weak;

*"We have heard the report of it; our hands grow FEEBLE; anguish hath taken hold of us, and pain, as of a woman in travail."*

In D'varim (Deuteronomy) 31:6 we have a contrast of strong and weak used;

*"Be strong and of good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them; for*

*the LORD thy God, he it is who doth go with thee; he will not FAIL thee, nor forsake thee."*

In Mishlei (Proverbs) 24:10 we have the use of weak as being faint; *"If thou FAINT in the day of adversity, thy strength is small."*

In every occurrence of this word the idea is that of lacking, or wanting. Is this a word used to describe those who trust and obey God? Remember that obedience is better than sacrifice.

In Mishlei 4:13 we have another use of the word for weak; *"Take fast hold of instruction; LET HER NOT GO. Keep her; for she is thy life."*

Does it sound like the weak are those who are free from God's laws?

### **Strong in the Lord**

Let us see who the strong in the Lord are. The Greek word for strong is *enounamoo*.

Romans 4:19-20 says;

*"And being not WEAK in the faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about a hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb. He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was STRONG in the faith, giving glory to God..."*

Avraham trusted in God and listened to him. Avraham was strong in the faith because he trusted in God's way and not his own, in spite of what those around him were probably telling him. Listen to what Luke says in his gospel, chapter 1:80;

*"And the child grew, and became STRONG in spirit, ..."*

and again; *"And the child grew, and became STRONG in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him."*

Yeshua was raised in the scriptures. His wisdom and understanding would have come from his learning and clinging to the words of His Father. In Acts 9:22 we are told that Sha'ul increased in strength. In Acts 24 and 28 we are told that Sha'ul kept Torah and observed the Lord's feasts. Sha'ul was not increasing in strength by turning away from Torah! In Ephesians chapter six we have the well known verses dealing with the armor of God. In verse 10 we are told to be STRONG in the Lord and in the power of HIS might. Verses 11-18 are symbolic images that are taken from the Old Testament. All these

images are references to the word of God. It is God's word in all its facets that protect us from the enemy. To be strong is not to be free from his commands, but to trust in them for they are our life according to the Psalmists. See also Philippians 4:13, 1 Timothy 1:12-13, 2 Timothy 2:1, 2 Timothy 4:17-18, and Hebrews 11:34.

The Hebrew word for strong is primarily *chazak*. This word means to be strong, mighty, or to hold fast. This word is used over three hundred times in the Tenach. It is usually used of physical strength, but as we have continually observed, the physical things are given to us to describe spiritual realities (Yochanan 3:12). One of the most revealing uses of being strong in the Lord is found in Y'hoshua 1:5-9; *"There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee; I will not FAIL thee, nor forsake thee. Be STRONG and of good courage; for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land which I swore unto their fathers to give them. Only be thou STRONG and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses, my servant, commanded thee; turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper wherever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is writtin therein; for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. Have not I commanded thee? Be STRONG and of good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed; for the LORD thy God is with thee wherever thou goest."*

What a beautiful, simple promise. No wonder Yochanan (John) said in 1 Yochanan 5:1-3;

*"Whosoever trusts that Yeshua is the Messiah is born of God; and everyone that loveth him that begot loveth him also that is begotten of him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and KEEP his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not burdensome."*

Next time we will continue to define who is strong and who is weak according to the scriptures.

## **Part 4**

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In part three we skimmed the surface as to the defining of the weak

and the strong. Romans 14 is always used by modern scholarship to show that Sha'ul is changing God's instructions, with His divine permission of course. Why is it that when the New Testament mentions eating, drinking or observance of days, that we automatically ASSUME that this is referring to the kashrut laws or the Sabbath? Sha'ul is writing this epistle to the gentiles in Rome! These are also new believers in the Lord. We have already seen how new ignorant (without knowledge) believers are to be handled in Acts chapter 15. The Apostles concluded that new believers were to abstain from pagan activities and go to synagogue every week to learn the word from Moses, and that the "Jewish" believers were to abstain from bombarding them with regulations they were not ready to handle. They also condemned the "Jewish" believers who still did not understand that redemption (the new birth) was not faith plus circumcision, or faith plus obedience to Torah.

Romans chapter 14 follows Sha'ul's instructions about service to God in chapter 12 and 13. Our bodies are to be a *"living sacrifice, HOLY and acceptable unto God..."* He explains how they all have different ministries in the body. In 12:9 he teaches that they are to abhor that which is evil and cling to that which is good. It is Torah that defines what is evil and what is good. He exhorts these new Roman believers to be subject to their rulers and do that which is good in chapter 13. In 13:8-10 Sha'ul defines loving thy neighbor, as Yochanan (John) also defines love in his first epistle. *"Owe no man any thing, but to love one another; for he that loves another has fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly COMPREHENDED in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love works no ill to its neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law."*

The word "comprehended" is from the Greek word *anakephalaioimai*. Say that five times real fast! This word means to sum up or to gather. It is also used in Ephesians 1:10 and translated there as to "gather together in one". Sha'ul, being a Jew and most knowledgeable in the Scriptures, is teaching these new believers what the command to love thy neighbor as thyself means. It means not to covet his neighbors things or wife, or to steal from him or murder him, etc. Yeshua also explains this when He answers the scribes about the two great commandments. He SUMS UP the commandments in the Old Testament in the two commandments to love God and to love your neighbor as yourself. He is not replacing all the commandments but GATHERING them up. This was a common understanding in Hebrew thought and would have been required knowledge for any

"Messiah" candidate.

In Romans 14 we come to the "weak in the faith". Sha'ul is about to give instructions concerning the weak in the faith, who were defined in the previous lesson. He begins:

*"Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believes that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eats herbs. Let not him that eats despise him that eats not: and let not him who eats not judge him that eats; for God hath received him."*

The context is clear, Sha'ul is addressing how to receive the weak in the faith. Right here is where modern scholarship makes it's first faulty assumption. They ASSUME that Sha'ul is contrasting the STRONG in the faith with the WEAK in the faith. There is no mention whatsoever to the strong in the faith, only the weak in the faith. In verse 2 a comma is inserted in the text which gives the appearance of this contrast, but the text, I believe, does not call for this contrast, (i.e. the strong in the faith verses the weak), but rather the weak verses the weak. Sha'ul is not comparing himself, a Torah observant Jewish believer, to the new gentile believers, but rather addressing the problems that weak brothers are experiencing among themselves. Back to the comma. Verse 2 can read, and should read according to the ongoing context:

*"For one believes that he may eat all things; another who is weak, eats herbs."*

This flows with the context of dealing with weak brothers. Sha'ul does not personally place himself in the context until verse 14. Here he says *"I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Yeshua, that nothing is unclean of itself; but to him that esteems anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean."*

Then he goes on to say in verse 15 that if a brother be grieved with your FOOD, now walkest thou not in love. Destroy not him with your FOOD, for whom the Messiah died. This is the exact same conversation that Sha'ul had with the new believers in Corinth in chapter 10. This is in reference to believers eating FOOD sacrificed to idols, and that this FOOD is not defiled, for idols are nothing. But Sha'ul's conclusion is the same. If the immature believer esteems this as unclean then the mature brother needs to understand this and not offend a new believer with FOOD. Then Sha'ul goes on to say that the kingdom of God is not FOOD and drink but, righteousness, and

peace, and joy in the Ruach HaQodesh.

I thought I would make a few more comments about this portion of Scripture, for it is misapplied texts such as this that I believe is responsible for much misery, disease, depression and moral corruption in the "church". It seems to be a Pavlov's dog thing to apply the food mentioned in verses two and three, and the word "day" in verses five and six, to the elimination of food instructions and the Sabbath. As I said before, Sha'ul had just finished instructing them to be holy and righteous, even in the midst of the pagan culture they were surrounded with. The Greek/Roman culture was packed full of "special days" and observances. The first day of the week "Sun-day" was elevated above the rest as the weekly worship of Isis, the "sun" goddess. Meats or FOODS were still being offered to her and sold in the market places. The new believers were accustomed to multiple gods and idol worship. These observances were common, everyday occurrences, and the principle religious activity of their relatives, neighbors and co-workers. Special days of the year were part of their lifestyle. Everybody did it! So it is in error, to conclude that Sha'ul is speaking of the dietary laws or the Sabbath in this chapter. The context seems to teach that these weaker brothers were squabbling among themselves over certain issues. Some, in their new found faith, were eating whatever FOOD they wanted and were being judged by those who were still eating only herbs. Abstaining from animal meat as a means of spiritual enlightenment was common in this culture (see 1 Timothy 4:3). Some were regarding certain days as above others and some were not. There is no reference to the Sabbath here for these people were not observers of the seventh day. When you combine these verses with all that Sha'ul teaches and the book of Acts, I believe that Sha'ul is addressing an attitude toward weak brethren. It would seem natural that at some time in the future these "weak" brothers will grow, mature, and become strong in the faith, and no longer be subject to the attitudes concerning a weak brother. Neither Yeshua nor Sha'ul would expect the weak in the faith to remain weak in the faith, but in the context of Acts 15, to grow through the teaching of the Word. I would think that it would be beyond any serious student of the word to conclude that God would suddenly render irrelevant, something previously precious in His sight. The Sabbath is not referred to as a day "above" the others, but rather the capstone or conclusion of the week. God designed it to be a picture of what it means to rest in Him. As Yeshua said, this day is made for us, not us for it. We will do an in depth teaching on the Shabbat at a later time.

I have spent a considerable amount of time addressing the common

Scriptures used to teach that God's instructions are not for us. I feel it is imperative to deal with these issues first. Whenever the issue of feasts, the Sabbath, or food is concerned, these flags always come up first. Many Christians desiring to really follow the Lord will be quoting these New Testament verses. These scriptures are terribly out of context, and are an excellent example of giant paradigm shifts in thinking. Without knowledge of the culture of the people who wrote these things, every kind of abhorrent behavior can be justified. Every kind of lifestyle can be rationalized. "Well, as long as you do it unto the Lord". This teaching breaks the heart of God, and modern "Christian" doctrine is destroying this country.

II Chronicles 7:14

***"If my people, who are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, AND TURN FROM THEIR WICKED WAYS, THEN will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their SIN, and will heal their land."***

## Part 5

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I have dedicated five parts to the subject of food. I could easily extend that to fifty parts, but that is not the design of these lessons. These lessons are intended to expose at least some of the "taken for granted" teaching that is passed from one generation to the next. We have discussed some of the "knee jerk" Scriptures used to allegedly prove that God is not interested in the physical, only the spiritual. Before we launch into Vayikra 11 (Leviticus) I would like to begin with a basic principle that is used in 1 Corinthians 15. I cannot assure you that this verse, or at least my understanding of this verse, is applicable in every doctrinal area, but I do believe it is a general principle, and is used by both Yeshua and Sha'ul. In 1 Cor 15:45-46 Sha'ul says, *"And so it is written, The first man, Adam, was made a life giving soul; the last Adam was made a life-giving spirit. However, that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual."* The comparison is Adam (natural) and Yeshua (the last Adam, spiritual). Laying the contextual teaching aside, I would like to focus on the principle of natural coming before spiritual. I do not believe that this is teaching on the nature of God, but rather the order of the matter/spirit relationship. The physical creation is a model from which we derive spiritual insight. Let me give a few examples. God the Father is spirit. Spirit is invisible and unseen, and virtually incomprehensible to man. God knew this in advance, so he gave instructions for the

design, function, and responsibilities of earthly fathers. When this picture is obeyed we can see how the heavenly Father is pictured. If the earthly father paradigm or model is perverted, then we get a perverted, untrustworthy picture of the heavenly Father. This is why we must remain faithful to God's design of earthly fathers. Another example is in Yochanan (John) chapter 3. Yeshua uses the physical birth to be a model of the spiritual birth. Spiritual birth is like the wind that blows where it will, and no one knows where it comes from. If you can grasp the physical birth, you can begin to see the spiritual, for it is a picture of the spiritual. This is why Yeshua said to Nicodemus in verse 12, *"If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you heavenly things?"* We could do dozens and dozens of lessons on just this subject. When you grasp what I am saying you will see these pictures everywhere. God placed His unseen nature as a picture in His feasts, the new moons, the Sabbath, the Mazzaroth, the furnishings in the tabernacle, the marriage, the parent/child relationship, the harvest cycles, the sons of Jacob, the talit, and in a pivotal crucifixion two thousand years ago. When these physical models and pictures are grasped and the "spiritual" is seen, then the physical picture is filled with purpose and meaning. *"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, SO THAT THEY ARE WITHOUT EXCUSE;..."*

God placed spiritual insight into the natural things. This is a subject that I will go into great detail on in next lessons, which will be on the tabernacle and its furnishings.

Food is an everyday, common occurrence. This is why I have spent so much time discussing it. It is a vital part of our existence. Chinese polka bands are not, so that is why I will not spend any time discussing them. We all agree that we need food in order to sustain life. So do you think God would have something to say about this subject? Do you think that He would be interested in what we should put in our stomachs and what we should not? Do you believe for a minute that He created all things to be eaten? Do you think that perhaps some of His living creation has another purpose other than human consumption? From the beginning God put a difference between various entities of His creation. Plant life was distinguished from animal life, and animal life from human life. The celestial bodies were distinct from earthly bodies. The creatures of the sea were different from the fowl of the heavens. Cattle were distinct from creeping things. Adam was created male and Eve was created



female. The tree of life was distinct from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The seed of the woman was different than the seed of the serpent. Abel's offering was distinct from Cain's. Noah's family was different than the rest of the inhabitants of the earth. When Noah was to enter the ark, the Lord made a distinction between animals that were clean and animals that were not clean (Bereshith 7:2). God has a distinct design and purpose for all of His creation. The English word "clean" is taken from the Hebrew word *taher*. The word clean is as good a word as any to describe the meaning of *taher*. This word is rarely understood in its context however. It is commonly misunderstood to speak of ritual only. To be unclean is commonly associated with sin or transgression. This is not always the case. When you read these words in context you will begin to see why God uses this word. For example, unclean things are not unclean to other unclean things. Kinda confusing? As you trace out "clean and unclean" you will see that God instructs us as to what is unclean for you and me. For example we are told in Vayikra 11 over and over again that certain animals are UNCLEAN UNTO YOU. Vayikra 11:4 says, "...*the camel, because he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof; he is UNCLEAN UNTO YOU....* In verse 7 the Lord states, "*And the swine, though he divide the hoof, and be cloven-footed, yet he cheweth not the cud; he is UNCLEAN TO YOU.*" In contrast He says in verse 9, "*These shall ye EAT of all that are in the waters: whatsoever hath fins and scales in the waters, in the seas, and in the rivers, them SHALL YE EAT.*" So, in speaking to humans He says that some things are unclean to you and others you may eat. A pig is not declared unclean to another pig. A camel is not unclean to a bear or to a pear for that matter. God is defining *taher* by its context. He is declaring what is good, healthy, and holy for you. Notice in Bereshith 7:2, the Lord declares, "*Of every clean (taher) beast thou shalt TAKE TO THEE by sevens, the male and his female; and of beasts that are NOT CLEAN by two, the male and his female.*" Notice that the beasts that are not clean Noah and his family are not to take "unto themselves". God makes a distinction between clean and not clean long before the "Law of Moses".

In the scholarly circles of modern Judaism there is much diversity of opinion in why God separated out certain animals from others. All of them see the fundamental differences in their physiology. Some draw somewhat mystical and ritualistic differences. As you peruse Vayikra chapter 11, you will see several qualifications concerning human consumption. You will begin to see a pattern for God's instructions, and the reason for not eating certain kinds will become clear. The qualifications for clean animals is basically two things. They must

chew the cud and split the hoof. Now we could go on and on, as many commentators in this area do, about the details of these two conditions. But I will cut to the chase. In general, animals that split the hoof are not meat eaters. They are basically docile vegetarians. They do not contaminate themselves with diseased meat or rotting corpses. They eat the grains of the field, grass and vegetation. In addition, they chew the cud, which basically means they digest their food an extra step. When you eat an animal that splits the hoof and chews the cud, you are eating what it ate, which is thoroughly digested vegetation. When you eat a meat-eating animal, you are also eating what it ate, which is who knows what. Meat-eating animals are not generally picky about what they tear to pieces or find laying along the road. What they digested you eventually eat as well. In other words, you are what you eat. This is generally speaking, of course. There are still a few animals that are being argued about today. In the area of the sea creatures and fish, you will notice basically the same thing. Creatures such as crab, lobster, or shrimp are bottom feeders of the sea, in general. They creep along the sea bed and scarf up whatever floats to the bottom. For the most part the scaled fish swim near the top and do not eat the scum from the bottom of the seas. The same is true with the fowl, in general. The birds that are not to be eaten are hunters and tear away the flesh of their prey.

There is a lot of room for pet peeve anecdotes and certain species which seem to fly in the face of these commands. There are, of course, many "clean" animals today that have been shot up with steroids and other drugs, and are no more healthy than many of the "unclean" animals. Many places where chickens are processed are disgusting. But this is due to man's greedy nature to increase profits and not a result in the nature of pigs or chickens. The "CROSS" did not change the basic nature of the animal kingdom. The cross provided "the way" for the change in OUR sinful nature, not for a change in our diet. I would suggest a careful perusal of some of the books available in various Messianic and Orthodox Jewish ministries. There are much more profound and scientific (if that's what you desire) answers to this discussion than I can provide. I only want to stir up a little anger for what Christians have been traditionally taught. I believe and teach with all that is within me that God is smarter than we are. He is eternally smarter. He can introduce instructions 3500 years ago that can have the same impact and relevance to our lives today as they did when He gave them. In fact, if you have read or listened to the "How Then Shall We Live" series, you know that we need them more today than yesterday because of entropy. God gave "natural" commands for the natural, as long as the

natural exists. When there comes a time, and soon it will be, that we are transformed spirit, soul, AND body, then "spiritual" instructions will continue for all that is spiritual. God is not ignorant! He knows just exactly how long the "natural" will be around.

Shalom Alecheim!

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