

What About Meat?

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The subject of whether the health laws of the Old Testament have been done away with or not has been the topic of debate among scholars for centuries. And Paul's letters do seem to add some controversy to the debate. So let us explore the Scriptures for ourselves to determine in our minds what is right.

Of Paul's letters, First Timothy speaks the loudest on the subject so let's pick it apart. Chapter four is where we want to be:

¹ Timothy 4:1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, **giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;**

Starting with verse one as he continues his instructions to Timothy he says that some will defect from God's truth in these latter times of apostasy. And that this is going to happen until Christ returns. The phrases "giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" refers to the following of occult practices. Satan is constantly at work with deception to corrupt and pervert the word of God. This will reach its peak during the tribulation.

^{Vs. 2} Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience **seared** with a **hot iron;**

If you burn your finger with a hot iron it will be numb for a while. If you burn it often enough it will stay numb all the time; ask any professional cook. The same thing happens to your conscience if you commit sin; especially the same one over and over again; it gets numb. Verse two calls it "seared." And in a lot of people it goes to the point of no return.

^{Vs. 3} **Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats,** which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.

Paul himself suggested singleness in 1 Corinthians 7:25-35 but he never made a command. After all he had no right to add any new laws. And the subject of fasting is spoken of in the gospel of Matthew 6:16-17, 9:14-15. (Also see Dan. 9:3, 10:3, Acts 10:20, 1 Cor. 7:5, and many more.) But neither one, or both of these are not, nor can they be, a prerequisite for salvation. That is definitely a false religion, a salvation by works. This was not something new, it had been practiced by Jewish sect known as the Essenes long before. Paul is attacking this self-denial program by saying that neither celibacy nor any form of diet saves or sanctifies. Salvation comes only by the Blood of Jesus Christ and our freely acceptance of that sacrifice and receiving of His grace.

^{Vs. 4} For every creature of God *is* **good**, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving:

Genesis 1:31 calls God's creation "very good." God created all things and gave them to man to enjoy and manage, back in vs.28. So the false teachings of self-denial contradict Scripture because God said that both marriage and food were good: Gen. 1:28-31, 2:18-24.

^{Vs. 5} For it is **sanctified** by the word of God and prayer.

To sanctify means to set apart for a holy purpose. But should you ask God to sanctify or purify that which He has already declared unfit? This is where most get off the track. As marriage is a holy institution so are those who belong to the body of Christ. God has given us knowledge that certain dietary laws affect our health. And these laws can be traced directly

back to the health laws in the Book of Deuteronomy. There is another note of interest that all tend to miss is the fact that the sentence that is in parentheses in Mark 7:19 **was added by translators.**

Mark 7:18 R.S.V. And he said to them, “Then are you also without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into a man from outside cannot defile him, since it enters, not his heart but his stomach, and so passes on?” **(Thus he declared all foods clean.)**

It is not included in red letters because Jesus did not speak it. (Check for yourself in any red letter Bible that has it.) It isn't in the King James or a few of the other translations. **It was added for doctrinal purposes; and it contradicts what God said in Matthew 5:17-19.**

Matthew 5:17 K.J.V. **Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.**

Vs. 18 **For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.**

Vs. 19 **Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.**

God warned about adding and subtracting from His Law in Deuteronomy 4:2, 12:32.

Deuteronomy 4:2 **Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish *ought* from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.**

12:32 **What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.**

When God says something twice in the same book we had better sit up and pay attention. Those that do these things are cursed because they teach men to go against part of God's Law revealed in the Book of Deuteronomy and in Matthew 5:18-19. The same thing is said about the Book of Revelation 22:18-19. (Notice that the verse numbers are the same for both Matthew and Revelation.) But what about Acts 10:9-15 and Peter's vision where he is told to eat unclean animals. Peter himself gives the explanation later in the chapter when he says “but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.” (Vs. 28) The animals in Peter's vision were only a type of mankind. He later says:

Vs. 34 . . . Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:

Vs. 35 **But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.**

To repeat the animals were only a representation of mankind in Peter's vision. The whole thing had nothing to do with dietary laws; it was a vision with symbols that represent other things. The symbol of the animals represented all mankind; the Gentiles. Eating of clean foods helps keep you clean physically remembering that your body is the Temple of the Holy Spirit. When God gave us the instructions on clean living He said:

Leviticus 11:44 **For I *am* the LORD your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I *am* holy; neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.**

There's that word "sanctify" again and this time God tells us "ye shall be holy; for I *am* holy." This "be holy" expression is repeated in Leviticus 19:2 & 20:7 in the Old Testament; but it also appears in the New Testament in 1 Peter 15-16. We are set apart, a holy people, a righteous nation of kings and priests that do not partake of the filth of this world. We are to be a light to this fallen world to show them the way.

Again, what did Jesus Himself say about the Law?

Matthew 5:17 **Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.**

Vs. 18 **For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.**

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Heaven and earth don't pass away till after the Great White Throne Judgment of Revelation 20 which is after the millennial Rein of Christ. So that means that the dietary laws are still in effect doesn't it? That might sound like a rhetorical question but you do need to answer it for yourself.

May God Richly Bless You!

Sources

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