

LEVITICUS

Lesson 17 - Chapter 11 Continued 3

Last week we ended the section of Leviticus chapter 11 that discussed the subject of animals that were divinely declared clean and unclean for food. Further we talked about the hopelessness of trying to determine WHY certain animals were set apart as clean, and others as unclean; and that we would do best to simply accept the Lord's selections, as an act of His sovereign will.

Due to the content of chapter 11 and its focus on Hebrew dietary rules, it has opened up the monumental subject of ritual cleanliness and holiness. We're going to continue that exploration today because it plays such a vital role in God's plan for His creation; further we really need to get a handle on this so that we can understand statements about purity in the New Testament as it was meant to be understood.

We've discussed several aspects of uncleanness, but now I would like to briefly address this question: is uncleanness the same thing as sin? In a word, no but uncleanness CAN be a product of sin, yet it is not always the case. As we'll see in the following chapters of Leviticus uncleanness is produced in a woman by her monthly cycle and by childbirth. There is certainly nothing **sinful** in that. Uncleanness is produced by contracting a skin disease (often, incorrectly, called Leprosy in our Bibles). There is certainly nothing sinful in that, yet typically the Scriptures tell us that the skin disease is an outward sign of a hidden and inner condition of sin. I would like to leave the matter of how uncleanness relates to sin for after a couple more chapters of Leviticus. For now, just go forward understanding that sin and uncleanness are **not** two words for the same thing. Do NOT equate sin and uncleanness in your minds. What is important is that Yehoveh's holiness MUST be and WILL be protected and separated from all uncleanness.

Today I'd like to begin to address the matter I'm sure most of you have been waiting for: do the kosher eating laws still apply? And, if they do, to whom do they apply? Do the Scriptural dietary laws apply to gentile Christian Believers, or to Messianic Jews, or to anyone for that matter?

Just like everything else we do in Torah Class we're not going to approach this in a simplistic "yes" or "no" manner because (as I hope you're beginning to see) this bottom-line approach to God-principles is Greek thinking, and it runs completely counter to the design and thought-style of the Bible. The truth is found in patterns that are set down beginning in Genesis and running through Revelation. The truth is **not** found in a verse or two that we hope will plainly state what it is we are seeking, and give us a brief rationale behind it.

I'd say that there is a near-unanimous agreement within the modern Church that, for a variety of reasons the Kosher eating laws of the Torah do NOT apply. The primary reason usually cited for that is the belief that Christ abolished the Law, the Torah.....of which the dietary laws are central. Therefore whatever was ordained by God before the birth of Yeshua, we can just wave our hand and make all Scripture that preceded His advent disappear. We don't need to revisit that territory; I've demonstrated time and again here in Torah Class that Christ, in the Sermon on the Mount, in Mathew 5:17-20, personally stated that He did NOT come to abolish the Law, and that anyone who teaches that He did will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. Rather anyone who teaches and obeys the Law will be called greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Since this is such a contentious matter we're going to be examining it today and next week as well. But in order to draw this lengthy subject of Kosher eating toward some sort of conclusion, and end up with some kind of guideline that we can begin to work with in our lives, I'm going to take the unusual approach (at least unusual for me) of giving you my conclusion right up front and then demonstrating to you how I came to that conclusion. Yet in all candor I must preface it by invoking the words of St. Paul as he was teaching the Corinthian Believers on the thorny subject of marriage and divorce; in paraphrase Paul said this in 1Corinthians 7: "Of what I am about to tell you I must confess that this is what ***I think***, and I'm not entirely sure if it is from the Lord". So take it for what it's worth.

So, with that understanding, here we go.

I am ***completely*** persuaded that Christ did NOT abolish the Torah....as He said, "not even one jot or stroke"; and therefore it is incomprehensible that He could have abolished the sacrificial system and the dietary laws which were part and parcel with the sacrificial system, and so central to the total body of Holy instruction called Torah. Yet, undeniably, something has changed; a great transformation in how Torah operates took place upon His death, resurrection, and the coming of the Holy Spirit. And much of the Laws of Torah are not in force because so many of those laws are dependent on the existence of a physical Temple and a physical Priesthood that currently do not exist (but they will in the near future).

As concerns the sacrificial system, the greatest transformation was that Yeshua took every requirement of that system..... the High Priesthood, the rituals and even the sacrifices themselves, upon His own shoulders. But make no mistake: the spirit and purpose of the Torah's sacrificial system is alive and well in that Christ's innocent and purest blood is still required every moment of every day to atone for our sins, just as an innocent animals' blood was required to atone for each sin committed before His coming. The spirit and purpose of Torah's ordained Priesthood is also still alive and well in that Yeshua now wears the mantle of High Priest, and is our permanent mediator in Heaven, just as the descendants of Aaron used to be human High Priests and mediators for Israel. And we (as His followers) are now, from a spiritual standpoint, the common priests. By means of trust in Yeshua we are set apart, sanctified, declared holy for service to Yehoveh just as certain designated families within the tribe of Levi were sanctified and set apart to officiate the sacrificial rituals and to serve Almighty God in a wide variety of ways in times past.

The Torah, which is a divine ideal that began as **purely** heavenly and spiritual in form (in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God) eventually became an earthly and physical system of rule and ritual when Yehoveh gave it to Moses and Israel at Mt. Sinai. And then 1300 years later at the foot of the Cross, that system of rule and ritual took on more aspects of its original heavenly and spiritual nature. Sacrifice has NEVER ceased to be required because as long as sin exists sacrificial atonement must exist; but now the ONLY sacrificial blood capable of producing atonement is Yeshua's. The priesthood has NEVER ceased to be required because God has always established set apart beings to carry out His will and to serve Him....be they angels or humans. But for our era those set apart and sanctified humans, the priesthood, are Believers. And as concerns the dietary laws, Kashrut, there are foods, and other things, that are still clean and unclean for us; yet, that too has transformed and it is no longer to be taken in the purely physical, earthly ritualistic sense it was at one time; now, it has returned (at least partially) to its spiritual and heavenly ideal.

Still another dynamic is involved in the transformation: because man is this strange combination of the physical and the spiritual....the ONLY living creature that is like that.... the manifestation of Torah ideals and principles is necessarily a combination of the spiritual and the physical, the invisible and the visible. And because in the current state of the Universe, the clean and the unclean, the sinfully corrupted physical and the perfectly holy spiritual, live side-by-side, the Torah still has a physical, earthly nature to it that accompanies its spiritual nature. I have explained this mystery on a number of occasions by using the term "The Reality of Duality". That is that we live in this sort of parallel universe whereby the spiritual and the physical exist simultaneously.....it is not a matter of one or the other as Greek thought must have it. The phenomenon of the Reality of Duality is not explainable in scientific terms.....it is only explainable in faith and in patterns....patterns that have come from the mind of Yehoveh, not from the minds of men.

So in a nutshell though the dietary laws have **not** been abolished, yet something is different as a result of what Jesus did. And at least part of that "something" the He did is that trust in Him trumps mindless legalistic obedience to physical, earthly rituals.....**when it comes to Salvation**. Let me emphasize that: faith overrides obedience as concerns gaining Salvation. Yet, that in no way says that obedience to Torah...which is the mind of God.... is now obsolete. Our Salvation is 100% dependent on trust that Christ's work on our behalf is the one and only thing that makes us acceptable to, and at peace with, Yehoveh. Yet... and this is where the church has fallen flat on its face.....obedience to the Lord's Torah still matters. In fact, the **result** of our Salvation ought to be, and is expected to be, obedience. Where is our gratitude to Yehoveh if we think obedience to his eternal Torah is now passé? How is He our Lord and Master if we are obedient only to ourselves? It is true (thank God) that the condemnation, the curse that the Torah pronounces (which is eternal separation from God) is now dead **for those who trust in Christ**. But never doubt that that same condemnation is alive and well for those who do not trust. Also never doubt (and this is made clear by all the apostles) that the **blessing** for those who are in Christ AND who obey the Torah remains. Am I saying that those who determine to obey Torah will receive blessings from above that those who are indeed saved, but do not obey, will not receive? YOU BET I AM! Is there blessing from following the dietary laws? Without question there is, as it is part of Torah. Ah, but is following Kosher eating rules required to gain, **or maintain**, our salvation? **Absolutely not!** On the other hand is

following the dietary laws, without trusting Christ, of any use? Equally the answer is no. Obedience to Torah, apart from trust in the Lord, is worthless. Other than for your own personal gain of eternal life, what good is Salvation apart from obedience to the One who has saved you?

Christ and Torah exist together, inseparable. Christ IS the Word. The Word IS the Torah. Trust and obedience exist together, inseparable. Trust gains salvation, obedience gains blessing to those who trust.

Now let me show you why I have come to those conclusions by looking at couple of places in the New Testament where it is often taught that kosher eating was abolished.....at least for gentiles. Let me remind everyone listening that this discussion we are having is all based around Leviticus chapter 11, which puts forth the dietary rules for Israel.

Turn your Bibles to Acts 10. This is the famous story of Peter and of the Roman army officer Cornelius, and the sheet full of animals being lowered down from heaven in a vision.

NIV Acts 10:9 "About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. 10 He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. 11 He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. 12 It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles of the earth and birds of the air. 13 Then a voice told him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat." 14 "Surely not, Lord!" Peter replied. "I have never eaten anything impure or unclean." 15 The voice spoke to him a second time, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean." 16 This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven. 17 While Peter was wondering about the meaning of the vision, the men sent by Cornelius found out where Simon's house was and stopped at the gate. 18 They called out, asking if Simon who was known as Peter was staying there."

And, that is where the story is usually stopped during a sermon or a teaching; and a teacher or pastor says, 'what could be more plain. God sends many animals to Peter in a vision, by all accounts these were the unclean forbidden animals, and tells him its OK to slaughter and eat them. Therefore it's the obvious that God has removed the unclean label on them and it is the end of kosher eating."

Well not so fast. The first thing we should notice is that as of verse 17, Peter had come to no conclusions as to what this vision meant; he was confused by it and had to think about what it was that God was telling him. Several verses later, in verse 34, Peter explains that while he at first thought this was about Kosher eating, he now understands it was not when he says: **NIV Acts 10:34 "Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism 35 but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right."**

Peter says that the vision was about accepting **men** from every nation (gentiles) who trusted in God into the fold of Believers. Anyone, regardless of they're ancestry, was to be eligible for Salvation through Jesus Christ; as Peter says, "no favoritism". So according to the Apostle

who wrote the actual Scripture of the book of Acts, we can throw this story out as an example of a NT instruction to abolish the Kosher laws of clean and unclean animals. As Peter finally figured out and stated this vision had nothing to do with food; rather it had to do with men. Food was used as the metaphor representing men because Peter went to sleep dreaming about the food that was being prepared for him; Peter was hungry. The unclean animals were simply a VERY familiar and well-understood Jewish **symbol** of the spiritual principle of uncleanness and of the status of gentiles. It had to do with the Jews shunning of gentiles (in this case it was Peter's reluctance to bring the Good News to the gentile Cornelius) because Jews regarded all gentiles as unclean; or as Yehoveh said in the book of Acts, "do not call unclean that which I tell you is clean".

But, let's take this another step; exactly WHO is it that is being referred to here as clean, who was formerly unclean? Gentile **Believers**. Up to now ONLY someone who physically joined Israel.....a foreigner, a gentile who gave up his former allegiances and officially became a Jew.... would be considered by the Jewish people to be clean. But, now, in some mysterious divine way, SOME gentiles have been **joined** to Israel, and therefore been joined to Israel's covenants with God, without physically and officially joining Israel.

When we look back in time we see that the mystery here is NOT that gentiles were allowed to join Israel and as a result brought "inside the camp"; that was old news having been commanded by Yehoveh from the very moment He began creating a wholly separate people by means of Abraham and the covenant He made with him. Yehoveh told Abraham that foreigners, gentiles, were to be allowed to join Israel PROVIDED they gave up their worship of false gods and declared allegiance to the God of Israel, and as a ceremonial matter were circumcised.

Rather the mystery of it all is that gentile Believers did **not** have to join Israel **physically**, yet somehow they became part of Israel and their covenants with God. For a Jew this meant that the gentile Believer did **not** have to have a circumcision and they did **not** have to come under the control of the Jewish civil and religious authorities. The foreigners also did **not** have to give up being gentiles and instead become Jews. But on another level, a spiritual level, gentiles DID become part of Israel. And this is the confusing part; how is this possible? How could this be? To most Jews this was only double-talk; a Jew on one hand, but not on the other. Paul does his best to explain how this can happen, but it is something that even he did not fully grasp nor could he express it as well as he would like to.

Turn your Bibles to Romans 2. It is here that Paul addresses this exact issue. I'm going to start reading at verse 25 and go to the end of that chapter.

CJB Romans 2:25 For circumcision is indeed of value if you do what Torah says. But if you are a transgressor of Torah, your circumcision has become uncircumcision! 26 Therefore, if an uncircumcised man keeps the righteous requirements of the Torah, won't his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision? 27 Indeed, the man who is physically uncircumcised but obeys the Torah will stand as a judgment on you who have had a b'rit-milah and have Torah written out but violate it! 28 For the real Jew is not merely Jewish outwardly: true circumcision is not only external and physical. 29 On the contrary, the real Jew is one inwardly; and true circumcision is of the heart, spiritual not

literal; so that his praise comes not from other people but from God.

My heart just cries out in joy because of these verses. But, it also cries out in pain because the Church has thrown this precious message right into the waste bin. We'll only spend a minute with this, though we could spend a day. Look at verse 27: it is speaking to the "one who is **not** circumcised physically". Who is that? Everyone in this room ought to know the answer to that question.....it's referring to us gentiles.....called the *uncircumcised* by Jews. Now, immediately following those words there is a qualification about the "uncircumcised" one, the gentle Believer; and that qualification is "**and yet obeys the Law**" (which is better translated "and yet obeys the Torah"). Hmmm. A gentile.....specifically a Believer because that is what the context is here.....a gentile Believer WHO YET OBEYS THE TORAH.

Then verse 28 and 29 tells us this: under the transformation brought about by Christ a man is NOT a Jew just because he has had a small flap of skin removed from his male organ. No; a man must have an inward change, in his heart (his mind), as a work of the Holy Spirit, not of himself or of other men.

And if we stop right there with Paul's statement we see nothing but condemnation for the Jews; we can even wonder if the Church has INDEED replaced the Jews as God's people, because now the true Jew, the true Israelite, is the one who has the Holy Spirit in him.....a Believer in Yeshua. Jews who don't accept the Messiah Yeshua are excluded. But as I have cautioned you many times, do NOT pay much attention to the chapter and verse marks; these were only added by scholars much later after the Scriptures were written as a convenience for study. So we find that this discussion by Paul continues right on into chapter 3. And, Paul, being a trained Rabbi, sets up the straw man; that is he anticipates the argument and so rhetorically asks the question a reasonable person would ask, and then proceeds to answer it.

Look at Romans 3. **CJB Romans 3:1 *Then what advantage has the Jew? What is the value of being circumcised? 2 Much in every way! In the first place, the Jews were entrusted with the very words of God. 3 If some of them were unfaithful, so what? Does their faithlessness cancel God's faithfulness? 4 Heaven forbid! God would be true even if everyone were a liar!- as the Tanakh says, "so that you, God, may be proved right in your words and win the verdict when you are put on trial."***

Now we're going to look at another chapter in Romans that gives even more depth to this. But, before we go there, let me point out another important dynamic that is being brought to light, and it is this: the **TRUE Israel or the Israel of God** that Paul speaks of in Galatians 6 is a spiritual concept....or better yet, the spiritual and heavenly reality. The earthly Israel that consists of humans, and tents, and animals, and a Tabernacle, and rituals and ceremonies is but the imperfect physical shadow of the TRUE spiritual ideal Israel. Paul is explaining that ALL who trust God and accept His son, Yeshua, as Lord and Savior are expressing the spiritual ideal of Israel. And what Scripture plainly tells us that the very first people to accept the spiritual ideal of True Israel were, naturally, Israelites (thousands of Hebrews accepted this reality but most did not). But.....and here is the big question.....does that mean that physical Israel, and therefore physical Israelites (Jews) no longer exists or are no longer Yehoveh's specially chosen people? Does this mean that with the advent of Jesus Christ has the **spiritual**

ideal of Israel now replaced physical Israel and physical Israelites? Has the distinction between physical Israel and everybody else that God first established with Abraham, then Isaac, then Jacob, and then his sons and heirs, become dissolved and abolished? Or does a gentile mystically transform into a flesh and blood physical Jew.....like a caterpillar morphing into a butterfly..... once He accepts Christ? The answer to all of these questions is an emphatic and unequivocal NO! Paul says in the first few verses of Romans 3 that the physical distinction between Jew and gentile remains. There are physical Jews and there are physical gentiles, and it will remain so. Being a physical Jew does have its advantages among which is the awesome duty and privilege to keep and protect the very Word of God that they were given at Mt. Sinai. So a gentile becoming a true Jew is a spiritual matter, expressing a real, living, spiritual reality. But.....physical Jews ALSO have to accept the reality of the true spiritual Israel in order to be part of it; and the ONLY way this happens is the same exact way it happens for gentiles.....trust in Yeshua. Those Jews who do NOT accept this spiritual reality go right on being physical Jews, and continue being part of physical, earthly, Israel.....but they are NOT part of the true spiritual ideal Israel.

Here's the thing that is so hard for those of us who have grown up in traditional church to accept: as Christians we have become spiritual Israelites.....or as Paul says, true Jews. This is not somehow derived from Scripture.....it is exactly what Paul says. We are part of heavenly, real, true, ideal Israel. That is a critical ingredient to the discussion of kosher eating. Because it says that whether we're born a physical Jew or physical gentile, once we trust in Christ we now all become one new man; and we become part of an entity called spiritual true Israel. Therefore, it cannot be so that Believing Jews have a different set of rules than Believing gentiles. It cannot be so that Believing Jews are OBLIGATED to keep Kosher, but Believing gentiles are not. What is so for one must be so for the other.

Let's now read Romans 11.

READ ROMANS 11:13-26

OK. Paul says we gentiles are grafted into Israel.... the spiritual Israel olive tree.....which represents the ideal Israel of God. Those physical Israelites who did NOT trust God, did NOT trust that Yeshua is His son who was sent to redeem us, were the branches broken off the olive tree....broken off of true spiritual Israel, **not** broken off of physical Israel. Jews who to this day do not believe Jesus is Messiah are alive and well and still Jews, still physical Israel. Paul is using the olive tree as but a standard metaphor for a spiritual reality: that of Spiritual Israel. The olive tree is not a gentile tree; it's an Israelite tree. Therefore, as Paul says, we shouldn't brag about our being grafted into that spiritual olive tree nor imagine that we know more than we do; because God had a reason for going about things this way. And what's the reason? As it says in verse 26, **"so that all Israel will be saved"**. Part of the reason gentiles were saved is so physical Israel could be saved. Paul is surely right.....we gentiles have every reason to be humble and none to be proud.

So we cannot escape the fact that you, me, all Believers are joined to Israel.....spiritual Israel. Don't want to be joined to Israel? Too bad. You became joined to Israel the instant you

accepted the Jewish Messiah. There IS NOT, and never will be, a **gentile** Messiah. Oh there is going to be a FAKE one in the near future.....He may be a gentile (but he COULD also be a Jew) and he WILL claim to be Messiah....we call him the Anti-Christ.

So with that as the context for our current condition as gentile and Jewish Believers (that we are spiritual Israelites, brought into this condition by faith in our Jewish Messiah).....let's move forward and see what Jesus Himself had to say about eating, and about what is clean and unclean.

Open your Bibles to Mark. I'm going to read starting at Mark 7:14.

CJB Mark 7:14 Then Yeshua called the people to him again and said, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand this! 15 There is nothing outside a person which, by going into him, can make him unclean. Rather, it is the things that come out of a person which make a person unclean!" 16 * 17 When he had left the people and entered the house, his talmidim asked him about the parable. 18 He replied to them, "So you too are without understanding? Don't you see that nothing going into a person from outside can make him unclean? 19 For it doesn't go into his heart but into his stomach, and it passes out into the latrine." (Thus he declared all foods ritually clean.) 20 "It is what comes out of a person," he went on, "that makes him unclean. 21 For from within, out of a person's heart, come forth wicked thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, 22 greed, malice, deceit, indecency, envy, slander, arrogance, foolishness.... 23 All these wicked things come from within, and they make a person unclean."

Now, without a doubt, a casual reading makes this sound like exactly what we've been told by church teachers and pastors since we were children: that Jesus says that there are no longer clean and unclean foods (or anything else for that matter); that Kosher eating has ended. Well, that's what happens when things are taken out of context, and when Bible Translators editorialize. In verse 19, most Bibles will put a parenthesis around the words "and thus He declared all foods clean". That is because those words do not exist in the original Scripture.....they were added as an editorial comment in Medieval times by theologians. If you have a KJV for instance you won't find those words. Those words are nothing more than an assumption and a footnote that Bible translators wrote into Scripture. They were wrong; and it simply reflected their ignorance or disdain of all things Jewish. Rather Jesus simply says that food is digested and then eliminated....human dung (as if the Pharisees didn't know that). Further, as verse 17 makes clear, Jesus spoke this as a PARABLE, not as literal. In other words Yeshua was using metaphor and illustration to demonstrate a pattern and make a point (that is the definition of a Parable). He makes no other judgment as regards the food itself.

As an example of how parables work we are all familiar with the one about the seed being scattered on hard ground, fertile ground, and rocky ground. And about how at times we need to allow the tares (weeds) to grow up alongside the wheat otherwise if we pulled out the weeds their roots might be entangled with the wheat and it would harm the wheat. Now does anyone honestly think that in that Parable Jesus was giving a lesson on agriculture? Was Jesus being a farming expert and explaining the best way to grow good crops? Of course not. He was using the wheat and tares and various soil types as an analogy on how the various kinds of people in the world receive the Good News of the Gospel, and then what happens to some people after

they do accept it.

It's the same thing here in Mark as it is with all of Jesus' Parables. He was not abolishing anything, and certainly not abolishing the concept of clean and unclean.

So, look at your Bibles again, only this time back up to verse 1 of Mark chapter 7.

CJB Mark 7:1 *The P'rushim and some of the Torah-teachers who had come from Yerushalayim gathered together with Yeshua 2 and saw that some of his talmidim ate with ritually unclean hands, that is, without doing n'tilat-yadayim. 3 (For the P'rushim, and indeed all the Judeans, holding fast to the Tradition of the Elders, do not eat unless they have given their hands a ceremonial washing. 4 Also, when they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they have rinsed their hands up to the wrist; and they adhere to many other traditions, such as washing cups, pots and bronze vessels.) 5 The P'rushim and the Torah-teachers asked him, "Why don't your talmidim live in accordance with the Tradition of the Elders, but instead eat with ritually unclean hands?" 6 Yeshua answered them, "Yesha'yahu was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites- as it is written, 'These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far away from me. 7 Their worship of me is useless, because they teach man-made rules as if they were doctrines.' 8 "You depart from God's command and hold onto human tradition. 9 Indeed," he said to them, "you have made a fine art of departing from God's command in order to keep your tradition! 10 For Moshe said, 'Honor your father and your mother,' and 'Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.' 11 But you say, 'If someone says to his father or mother, "I have promised as a korban" ' " (that is, as a gift to God) " ' "what I might have used to help you,"" 12 then you no longer let him do anything for his father or mother. 13 Thus, with your tradition, which you had handed down to you, you nullify the Word of God! And you do other things like this."*

And, then of course, verse 14 starts with "listen to me, nothing that goes into you makes you unclean....."

Here we discover that Yeshua's entire conversation had nothing to do with clean and unclean foods. Rather it had to do with the extensive list of Traditional purity laws, in this case it is ritual hand washing....which as He rather angrily points out.....isn't even Scriptural; it's a manmade tradition. According to Jewish Tradition if a Hebrew didn't go through a ritual hand washing before he ate he defiled his otherwise clean kosher food....his perfectly acceptable food became unclean. To this, Jesus says "nonsense". So we can dispose of another story erroneously given as an example of Kosher eating being eliminated; for in fact, Kosher food isn't even the topic discussed here, it is hand washing and other ritual traditions of the elders that is being shot down by Yeshua.

Now, for those among us who generally advocate kosher eating as a way Believers should follow, you're probably feeling pretty good right about now. And, for those who don't, I suspect you're not. Well, if it were only that easy.

I promise you we won't end this topic here, but I do need to end it for tonight. I'd like to close

with this thought: the reason that God employed the whole clean and unclean pattern is because it follows an established God-pattern and is one of the greatest demonstrations of the Lord's governing dynamic of dividing, electing, and separating the things of this world. The Lord states in Leviticus 11:47 that the REASON for His detailed laws on clean and unclean animals is "to distinguish between the unclean and the clean". That by His defining of what is unclean and clean, His people will know the difference and avoid the unclean; they don't have to guess. The Lord is all about separating; Satan is all about putting everything back into one pile and eliminating distinctions. The Lord is about drawing distinctions between right and wrong, good and evil, holy and unholy, heterosexual and homosexual, saved and unsaved, and male and female. The Lord established nations with distinctive languages and He divided and separated them with borders and boundaries so that He can use them and judge them accordingly.

Satan is about removing all separations and distinctions; right and wrong are relative; good and evil evolves with time; no one is chosen by God, all are the same; all sexuality is OK; there is no difference between the sexes and the roles and duties of each sex should not be distinct. Borders between nations should be erased and all people should become as one.

God says that His people are to be holy and therefore they are to avoid the things He has declared not clean. Satan says there is no such thing as holy and there certainly is no such thing as unclean. Everything and everyone is equal and the same; there should be no distinctions.

Where we have to be very careful in drawing our distinctions is that we get them from Holy Scripture and not devise them ourselves. When we do choose our own distinctions, we get bigotry, racial and ethnic oppression, mistreatment of women and minorities, and all sorts of ugly results. The world is in the process of doing everything it can to put the Tower of Babel back together again. We are told from our government and our news sources, and now even many within the Church and Synagogue authority, that God's intent is that all distinctions are to be erased on Earth, because THAT is true love.

This is a lie. That uncleanness is abolished is also not true. We'll continue exploring this challenging yet critical subject next week.