



## **Eat To the Glory of God**

### **Leviticus 11**

#### **1. What?**

#### **2. Why?**

For the past month and a half, my wife and I have been on a diet. We have been doing Weight Watchers on the cheap. Weight Watchers has been around for more than 50 years. The premise of the program isn't to limit you in any way on what you eat. Rather, the program is designed to limit how much you eat. Each food is assigned a point value, depending upon how much this sort of food impacts your weight. Cookies and candies and ice cream are very high in points. Carbohydrates and cheeses and nuts and oils are high in points. Meats and eggs and Milk are lower points. Fruits and vegetables are zero points.

Based upon your age, sex, height, and weight, you get a daily allowance of points that you can eat. It's as simple as that! You record everything that you eat, and be careful not to go over your daily allowance. In other words, you "watch your weight." But, in general, if you eat a balanced diet in moderation, you can eat pretty much whatever you want.

Now, if you love your ice cream, you can sacrifice a bit by eating less of everything else and spend your points on ice cream. If you are hungry, you can pile on the fruits and vegetables; they are free. Also, if you want to eat more, then exercise. You get a few more points if you exercise.

There are weight loss meetings to attend, which help provide some accountability. But, it is expensive. Now, I said that we are doing "Weight Watchers on the Cheap," because, there's an app for your mobile device for \$4 that helps you track your weight. Our accountability is with each other. And we have done well. For the most part, we have done this without going hungry.

The biggest thing that we have learned is that we have been eating way more than our body actually needs. Furthermore, the habit of tracking my food intake has

really helped me to curb what I eat, because you get points every time you bite, lick, or taste anything. And our children are tired of us talking about our "points."

But, this is only one of many diets. I know that some of you have been on the Trim Healthy Mama diet and have lost many, many pounds. For that, I commend you. From the best that I can tell, the overall philosophy of this plan is simple: Keep your fats away from your carbohydrates. Don't eat them together, as one will be used for fuel and the other will be stored away as fat. Eat protein at every meal. Avoid sugar in all forms. Do this and you will lose weight and feel better. [\[1\]](#)

Some of you could stand up here and tell the method of your particular diet. And you could give testimony of the weight that you have lost. That's wonderful. And there are many other diets that people have used successfully as well. Perhaps some of you might be a follower of any one of these diets. [\[2\]](#)

The **South Beach Diet** focuses on lean protein, low-fat dairy, and good carbs, such as whole grains, vegetables, and fruit.

The **Mediterranean Diet** focuses on the heart-healthy food staples of those living near the Mediterranean Sea, like seafood and nuts and whole grains, and olive oil.

The **Zone Diet** pushes for 30% calories from protein, 30% from fat, and 40% from carbohydrates.

The **Atkins Diet** avoids foods with refined flour and sugar, and urged high-protein foods.

The **Paleo Diet** goes back to foods of the cavemen era, emphasizing fish, meats, fruit, veggies and nuts with lots of exercise.

The **Volumetrics** approach focuses upon eating fewer calories while feeling full, so fruits and vegetables are high in water content.

The **Raw Food Diet** restricts food from being heated above 118% Fahrenheit, believing that higher heats break down the food's nutritional benefits.

The **NutriSystem** approach limits your calories based on age and gender by eating only pre-made food carefully calculates calories.

The **Macrboiotic Diet** promotes whole foods and encourages meditation and slowing down your lifestyle.

The **Biggest Loser Diet** focuses on healthy foods and regular exercise.

The **Jenny Craig Diet** focuses on restricting calories, fat and portions, by eating specially prepared meals that you purchase.

The **Slim-Fast Diet** focuses on restricting calories and portion sizes, by replacing your meals with specially prepared shakes or meal bars.

The **Spark Solution Diet** gives you a detailed meal plan for the first two weeks put you on a trajectory of healthy eating.

The **Flat Belly Diet** encourage eating monounsaturated fatty acids, like nuts, chocolates, seeds, and olive oil help to keep blood vessels soft and pliable after digestion.

The **HMR Diet** (Health Management Resources) focuses on low-calorie shakes, meals, nutrition bars and multigrain hot cereals.

Beyond this, there are many other diets: the 17 Day Diet, the 3-Day Diet, The Abs Diet, the Acid Alkaline Diet, the Anti-Inflammatory Diet, The Body Reset Diet, the Cookie Diet (nine small, specially-formulated cookies and one substantial meal); the DASH Diet, the Dukan Diet, the Eco-Atkins Diet, the Engine 2 Diet, the Flexitarian Diet, the Gluten-Free Diet, The Glycemic-Index Diet, the Low FODMAP Diet, the Lemonade Diet, The Mayo Clinic diet, the Medifast Diet, the Ornish Diet, the Supercharged Hormone Diet, the Fast Diet, the TLC Diet, the Traditional Asian Diet, the Vegan Diet, and the Vegetarian Diet.

I'm sure with a bit of internet searching, you could find even more diets and organizations, (like the Trim Down Club), seeking to help you lose and control your weight, ... and more than willing to sell you their products.

Did you know that diets are Biblical? In the Old Testament, God gives a diet for the Jewish people to follow. The diet consists of food that you can eat, and food that you cannot eat. It's found in Leviticus, chapter 11. If you haven't done so already, I invite you to open your Bibles and turn with me to Leviticus 11. Over the course of the past several months, we have been looking at this wonderful book of the Bible. This chapter begins another section in the book of Leviticus.

The first five chapters of Leviticus (1-5) focus upon the sacrifices that God required. The next five chapters (6-10) focus upon the priests. They describe the role of the priests in offering these sacrifices as well as the ordination of the first priests. And the next five chapters (11-15), beginning with chapter 11, are laws concerning clean and unclean practices.

As I read our text this morning, I want for you to listen for the words, "clean and unclean," these words occur some 36 times in this chapter. And as you listen to these words, don't think, "sinful and unsinful." Because that misses the point. So far, the book of Leviticus has been about approaching God in worship. And the talk about being "clean" and "unclean" carries the same theme.

In order to approach God in worship, we must be clean. Sacrifices must be offered for our sins. The priests who offer those sacrifices must be cleansed. And if anything is wrong, it may mean death. Likewise for the Israelites, there were practices that would defile them. It's not that these practices are sinful, in and of themselves. For instance, in chapter 12, we read about a woman who gives birth. She is unclean for forty to eighty days. It's not that giving birth is sinful. Children are a blessing from the LORD (Psalm 127). It can't be that the process to that blessing is sinful.

It's that the process is bloody and messy. And it takes some time for a woman to be purified for temple worship. And during the time of cleansing, the LORD says, "She shall not touch anything holy, nor come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purifying are completed" (Leviticus 12:4).

Those with skin diseases were unclean. As a result, they could not to come into the tabernacle, for they would make the tabernacle "unclean" (chapters 13-14). It's not that those with skin diseases were sinful people. They were simply not fit to enter into the presence of God with God's people.

And so it is with these dietary laws. Certain food cannot be eaten without making you unclean. Also, in this chapter, you will see some things that you cannot touch, like dead bodies. They too will make you unclean and unfit for worship in the temple.

Let's begin by reading Leviticus chapter 11.

### Leviticus 11

And the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying to them, "Speak to the people of Israel, saying, These are the living things that you may eat among all the animals that are on the earth. Whatever parts the hoof and is cloven-footed and chews the cud, among the animals, you may eat. Nevertheless, among those that chew the cud or part the hoof, you shall not eat these: The camel, because it chews the cud but does not part the hoof, is unclean to you. And the rock badger, because it chews the cud but does not part the hoof, is unclean to you. And the hare, because it chews the cud but does not part the hoof, is unclean to you. And the pig, because it parts the hoof and is cloven-footed but does not chew the cud, is unclean to you. You shall not eat any of their flesh, and you shall not touch their carcasses; they are unclean to you.

"These you may eat, of all that are in the waters. Everything in the waters that has fins and scales, whether in the seas or in the rivers, you may eat. But anything in the seas or the rivers that does not have fins and scales, of the swarming creatures in the waters and of the living creatures that are in the waters, is detestable to you. You shall regard them as detestable; you shall not eat any of their flesh, and you shall detest their carcasses. Everything in the waters that does not have fins and scales is detestable to you.

"And these you shall detest among the birds; they shall not be eaten; they are detestable: the eagle, the bearded vulture, the black vulture, the kite, the falcon of any kind, every raven of any kind, the ostrich, the nighthawk, the sea gull, the hawk of any kind, the little owl, the cormorant, the short-eared owl, the barn owl, the tawny owl, the carrion vulture, the stork, the heron of any kind, the hoopoe and the bat.

"All winged insects that go on all fours are detestable to you. Yet among the winged insects that go on all fours you may eat those that have jointed legs above their feet, with which to hop on the ground. Of them you may eat: the locust of any kind, the bald locust of any kind, the cricket of any kind, and the grasshopper of any kind. But all other winged insects that have four feet are detestable to you.

"And by these you shall become unclean. Whoever touches their carcass shall be unclean until the evening, and whoever carries any part of their carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until the evening. Every animal that parts the hoof but is not cloven-footed or does not chew the cud is unclean to you. Everyone who touches them shall be unclean. And all that walk on their paws, among the animals that go on all fours, are unclean to you. Whoever touches their carcass shall be unclean until the evening, and he who carries their carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until the evening; they are unclean to you.

"And these are unclean to you among the swarming things that swarm on the ground: the mole rat, the mouse, the great lizard of any kind, the gecko, the monitor lizard, the lizard, the sand lizard, and the chameleon. These are unclean to you among all that swarm. Whoever touches them when they are dead shall be unclean until the evening. And anything on which any of them falls when they are dead shall be unclean, whether it

is an article of wood or a garment or a skin or a sack, any article that is used for any purpose. It must be put into water, and it shall be unclean until the evening; then it shall be clean. And if any of them falls into any earthenware vessel, all that is in it shall be unclean, and you shall break it. Any food in it that could be eaten, on which water comes, shall be unclean. And all drink that could be drunk from every such vessel shall be unclean. And everything on which any part of their carcass falls shall be unclean. Whether oven or stove, it shall be broken in pieces. They are unclean and shall remain unclean for you. Nevertheless, a spring or a cistern holding water shall be clean, but whoever touches a carcass in them shall be unclean. And if any part of their carcass falls upon any seed grain that is to be sown, it is clean, but if water is put on the seed and any part of their carcass falls on it, it is unclean to you.

"And if any animal which you may eat dies, whoever touches its carcass shall be unclean until the evening, and whoever eats of its carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until the evening. And whoever carries the carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until the evening.

"Every swarming thing that swarms on the ground is detestable; it shall not be eaten. Whatever goes on its belly, and whatever goes on all fours, or whatever has many feet, any swarming thing that swarms on the ground, you shall not eat, for they are detestable. You shall not make yourselves detestable with any swarming thing that swarms, and you shall not defile yourselves with them, and become unclean through them. For I am the Lord your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. You shall not defile yourselves with any swarming thing that crawls on the ground. For I am the Lord who brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy."

This is the law about beast and bird and every living creature that moves through the waters and every creature that swarms on the ground, to make a distinction between the unclean and the clean and between the living creature that may be eaten and the living creature that may not be eaten.

If this passage of Scripture teaches us anything, it teaches us this: God is concerned with all matters of our lives. He is even concerned with our diet, what we eat. My message this morning is entitled, "Eat to the Glory of God." It comes

from 1 Corinthians 10:31, "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."

By way of outline this morning, I have two points:

1. What?
2. Why?

I want to spend a few moments thinking through what this chapter is saying, simply getting familiar with the text. Then, I want to seek an answer to why God gave these commands? OK, so let's begin with ...

## **1. What?**

Let's begin with the facts. Regarding the land animals, God said that you may eat the animal that parts the hoof and chews the cud.

So, let's see how much you have learned. Let's give a little quiz. A camel? It chews the cud, but does not part the hoof. So, no. A pig? It parts the hoof, but does not chew the cud. No. A cow? It both parts the hoof and chews the cud. Yes! The cow is clean and edible.

OK, that does it for the land animals. Let's move on to the animals in the waters. The requirements here are fins and scales. Easy enough? How about a dolphin? It has fins, but does not have scales. No. How about a lobster? Lobsters have neither fins nor scales. So, no. How about a largemouth bass? These have both fins and scales. So, yes, it is clean and edible.

What about the birds? You can't eat these: the eagle, ostrich, owl, bat, heron, hoopoe (the hoopoe happens to be the national bird of Israel). What about insects? You may not eat the house fly or the green beetle. You may eat the cricket and grasshopper.

Verses 24-40 can be summed up by simply saying, do not touch dead animals. Obviously, in verses 24-40, there is a bunch more detail. But, essentially, it's all the same: Don't touch a carcass.

Well that is the "What?" Now, ...

## **2. Why?**

At this point, the big question is why? Why the difference in these animals? Why are some clean and some unclean? Why can you eat some of these animals, but not the others?

There are all sorts of theories why. And I'm not sure that any of them make full sense of these matters.

Some have taken them to be entirely **symbolic**. Chewing the cud is like meditating on the word of God. So, these animals are permissible to eat. Parting the hoof is like showing discernment. So, these animals are permissible to eat. The problem with this view is that your interpretation will go as far as your imagination will take you. We might say, "You can't eat the eagle, because we might tend to soar away from God and his ways. The fins on a fish keep it moving in a straight path." Beware, because it can even take you down bad paths as well. Couldn't scales be symbolic of scales on your eyes? Why aren't parted hoofs symbolic of a double-minded man?

Some have taken these laws to be **pragmatic**. Reduce the number of animals that you can eat, and you curb animal slaughter. This is a high concern for PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals), but such seems hardly a concern to God. Animal sacrifices were costly and wasteful. He commanded a sacrifice every morning and evening. God isn't concerned with the number of animals we eat. Leviticus 11 puts no limit on the number of animals you can eat, only the kind of animals.

But, other pragmatic reasons might be that "a camel ... is more useful as a beast of burden than as a source of food." Furthermore, "the pig consumes a quantity of food that is disproportional to its value as a food source." <sup>[3]</sup> You put these things together and you can see some explanations for why the laws are given as they are. But, there is no textual warrant in the Scripture for such an interpretation. And it can't explain the animals in the wild that you neither use for a purpose or give attention to feeding.

Some have taken the aesthetic view, you can only eat those animals that are pleasant in appearance. When such an animal is placed before you, you would be repulsed. Like eating dog would certainly be difficult for many of us. But beauty is in the eye of the beholder. What is repulsive to one might easily be pleasing to another. Like horse meat, which is a delicacy in many other countries. Nearly 5 million horses a year are slaughtered and eaten.

Some have taken a **theological** view. The animals prohibited are the animals that were involved in pagan worship of the nations surrounding Israel. But, other nations sacrificed plenty of bulls and goats, which are considered clean. So, it doesn't quite match what was going on with pagan worship in the ancient world. Why can you eat fish if Dagon, the fish god, is the God of the Philistines?

Some have taken the **morphological** view. This view sees the clean animals are those that demonstrate wholeness and normality. There is something normal about a sheep or a goat or a cow. There is something not normal about a pig or a camel. There is something normal about a typical fish in the water (i.e. fins and scales) There is something not normal about the other animals that live in the water. Perhaps this view has merits. But, it's difficult to fully understand what makes some animals "normal" or "whole," and what is not natural for the other animals.

But, most people naturally land on the **hygienic** view. That is, the animals on the "do not eat" list are there for health reasons. You can get trichinosis from pigs. You can get tularemia from rabbits. And dangerous bacteria can be carried by animals that burrow in the mud in ponds or animals that prey on dead animals. And for us health-conscious Americans, this can be an attractive understanding of these laws. Surely, there are those who follow the Hebrew Diet. And I'm sure they find some good results.

And this argument has been around for a long time. Even John Calvin, who lived in the 1500's interacted with this view. This interpretation finds further confirmation when you see the laws concerning touching a dead animal (verses 24-40). Of course, we know that dead animals are full of harmful bacteria as the body breaks down.

In some measure, the health benefits of Leviticus 11 are great. But, the difficulty of understanding this chapter as merely health-related, comes when you realize that the New Testament does away with all of these eating laws. Does God no longer care about our health? He does. But, from the start, His concern has always been with our spiritual health.

For instance, in Mark 7, we read of how some of the Pharisees noticed that Jesus' disciples didn't wash their hands according to the Hebrew traditions before they ate (Mark 7:2-4). And so, they came and asked Jesus, "Why do your disciples not

walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?" (Mark 7: 5). After some back and forth with the unteachable Pharisees, he gathered the crowds and said, ...

Mark 7:14-15

Hear me, all of you, and understand: There is nothing outside a person that by going into him can defile him, but the things that come out of a person are what defile him."

And later, ...

Mark 7:17-23

And when he had entered the house and left the people, his disciples asked him about the parable. And he said to them, "Then are you also without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him, since it enters not his heart but his stomach, and is expelled?" (Thus he declared all foods clean.) And he said, "What comes out of a person is what defiles him. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person."

In other words, Jesus said, "You aren't defiled by the external foods that enter your mouth. They are digested and soon find their way into the toilet. Rather, your defilement comes from within." And in saying this, Jesus declared all foods clean (Mark 7:19). Furthermore, the apostle Paul speaks about those who submit themselves to the Levitical law in these matters. In Colossians 2:16-17, Paul writes, ...

Colossians 2:16-17

Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.

In other words, these sorts of regulations on food and drink as found in Leviticus are shadows that point us to Jesus. In Christ, you have the substance and not the shadows. "Let no one judge you for this," Paul says. The only way that he could say this is if it's really true that all foods are now clean.

At this point, let's remember what we talked about in my first message on Leviticus. Some things in Leviticus no longer apply to us because of the cross. Leviticus 11 is one of those sections of Leviticus that are fulfilled in Jesus. The rules here were binding upon the original Jews, but fulfilled in the cross. We no longer need to keep these laws. Instead, we can gratefully share in all foods (1 Timothy 4:3-5).

Now, that's not to say that it's wrong in keeping a "Hebrew diet." Many Jews do this today. It's called a "Kosher Diet." Translated, "kosher" simply means the "fit, proper, or correct" diet. I have no problem with a Jew eating kosher. It's part of their culture. It's part of their heritage. And if you want to win a Jew, don't begin by inviting them to the pig roast. Show them Jesus. Furthermore, I have no problem with any of you eating a kosher diet. If that's the sort of food that you want to eat, have at it.

But, here comes the warning for those who may be keeping this diet: don't pass judgment upon those who don't follow the kosher laws. "They aren't being godly because they aren't eating right!" This is the very thing that Paul prohibits in Colossians 2:16-17. Eating and drinking (or keeping a festival or Sabbath) are shadows that point us to Christ. Don't get sucked into the shadow, and forget the substance. Don't be swayed by those forcing their own eating standards upon you. Furthermore, staying away from the unclean foods and unclean things aren't going to help in overcoming sin (Colossians 2:21-23).

So, if you choose to follow this diet, that's fine. But, be careful, because it can make you judgmental of others. That's what legalism does. It brings in a judgmental attitude. You say, "Here's the standard of righteousness that I follow. I found it in the Bible. Therefore, I'm following in obedience. If others are truly godly, they will follow after my ways, because I'm following the Bible. Pity those who are living to a different standard." Be warned, "With the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you" (Matthew 7:2).

Now, I do have problems with the Seventh-Day Adventists, who strive to keep these laws. They worship on Saturday. They seek to keep the Mosaic food laws. They profess to be believers in Christ, (and no doubt, some of them are), but in their seeking to follow the law, I'm afraid that many of them are trusting in their own works, that they are righteous because they are following the law.

I applaud their intent. But, they are going down the same path as many in the early church who said that, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved" (Acts 15:2). But, James and Peter and Paul and Barnabas would have nothing of it. As Peter said, "We believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as [the Gentiles] are" (Acts 15:11).

So, if you ever say, "Unless you keep the dietary laws according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved," you are going down a wrong path. And the Seventh-Day Adventists are right on the edge of that path. My warning to them is this, "Be careful," that you don't find your righteousness in your practice of the law, rather than in Christ. For, as Paul says, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes" (Romans 10:4). And in a culture of law-keeping, it's difficult to keep straight that Christ has fulfilled the law (Matthew 5:17) and has done what we could not do in the flesh (Romans 8:3).

Now, there are some who say, "Like any diet, this must be a hard diet to keep." Actually, it's not if you only eat at home. If you only purchase kosher food, and it's the only thing in your house, then you are 99% of the way to eating kosher. The rest applies to how you cook certain things. Make sure that there aren't any bugs in your vegetables, as they are unclean. Make sure that you don't mix meat and dairy. And so on.

One Jewish person said this, ...

Actually, keeping kosher is not particularly difficult in and of itself; what makes it difficult to keep kosher is the fact that the rest of the world does not do so.

The basic underlying rules are fairly simple. If you buy your meat at a kosher butcher and buy only kosher certified products at the market, the only thing you need to think about is the separation of meat and dairy.

Keeping kosher only becomes difficult when you try to eat in a non-kosher restaurant, or at the home of a person who does not keep kosher. In those situations, your lack of knowledge about your host's ingredients and food preparation techniques make it very difficult to keep kosher. Some commentators have pointed out, however, that this may well have been part of what G-d had in mind: to make **it more difficult for us to socialize with those who do not share our religion.** [\[4\]](#)

And now, we might be getting to the real reason why God gave the Jews these dietary restrictions: to keep them separate from a pagan world. "God made it more difficult ... to socialize with those who do not share our religion." Perhaps this, far more than any of the other explanations, helps us to understand the reason for these laws. I say this because the only sort of indication that we get concerning the "why" of these laws comes at the very end of the chapter. Look again at verses 43-45, ...

Leviticus 11:43-45

You shall not make yourselves detestable with any swarming thing that swarms, and you shall not defile yourselves with them, and become unclean through them. For I am the Lord your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. You shall not defile yourselves with any swarming thing that crawls on the ground. For I am the Lord who brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy."

In many ways, these verses form the capstone of this entire chapter. Why stay away from certain foods? Because I am the LORD your God. Because I am holy. Therefore you shall be holy. You shall be like Me, and not like the pagan nations. One commenter noted, "A Jew who observes the Kosher laws cannot eat a meal without being reminded of the fact that he is a Jew." Every mealtime would be a reminder to Jews of their God! This would only help to keep them distinct from the other nations around them.

Now, did you notice at all that the clean animals were the very animals that God required for sacrifice? Bulls and goats and lambs and pigeons and turtledoves are all clean animals. We eat what God eats. And being like Him, we will be different than the world.

The main idea of holiness is "cleanness" or "purity." But, with that idea comes another, which is always closely linked. It's the idea of being separate. It's the idea of being set apart. Both of these are true of God. He is an absolutely pure being. And He is entirely set apart from us. He is distinct.

Likewise with these eating laws. As Israel would keep these laws, it would help to keep them removed and distinct and separated from the nations surrounding them.

And it's right here that we can see why these laws have been abolished. Because, God's saving plan has been extended to the world. The gospel is for all nations! It's

not merely for the Jews to enjoy, or just for those who convert to Judaism. It's for all who would believe in Jesus. And when God made this evident to the early church, He made it evident through food.

Turn with me to Acts, chapter 10. At this point in the history of the church, the gospel had been primarily kept to the Jews. Certainly, there were exceptions, like the Ethiopian Eunuch. But, the exception proves the rule. The gospel was centered on the Jews in the synagogues. But God was about to shatter that notion.

#### Acts 10:1-15

At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of what was known as the Italian Cohort, a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms generously to the people, and prayed continually to God. About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God come in and say to him, "Cornelius." And he stared at him in terror and said, "What is it, Lord?" And he said to him, "Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa and bring one Simon who is called Peter. He is lodging with one Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea." When the angel who spoke to him had departed, he called two of his servants and a devout soldier from among those who attended him, and having related everything to them, he sent them to Joppa.

The next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray. And he became hungry and wanted something to eat, but while they were preparing it, he fell into a trance and saw the heavens opened and something like a great sheet descending, being let down by its four corners upon the earth. In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air. And there came a voice to him: "Rise, Peter; kill and eat." But Peter said, "By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean." And the voice came to him again a second time, "What God has made clean, do not call common." This happened three times, and the thing was taken up at once to heaven.

To make a long story short, let me simply say that Peter was confused about these things (verse 17). But, at that very moment, some men arrived at his door, explaining the vision that Cornelius had seen, and requesting him to come to Caesarea to the house of Cornelius (verses 17-23). So, he went (verses 24-24) and the vision became clear. Look at verse 28, ...

Acts 10:28-29

And he said to them, "You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit anyone of another nation, but God has shown me that I should not call any person common or unclean. So when I was sent for, I came without objection. I ask then why you sent for me."

So, he preached the gospel to Cornelius and all "his relatives and close friends" (verse 24). He preached the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. He said, ...

Acts 10:42-43

And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

Cornelius, his relatives and his close friends all believed and the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues, just like at Pentecost. And they were baptized. And this caused a bit of a stir among the Jews.

Acts 11:1-3

Now the apostles and the brothers who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcision party criticized him, saying, "You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them."

Peter explained everything that happened. And the conclusion comes in verse 18, ...

Acts 11:18

When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, "Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life."

God's plan of salvation was extending to the world. His dealings with Cornelius and Peter were totally miraculous. This was God moving in the hearts of the Gentiles. God granted repentance to them that they might be saved. And this is what God does with all who are saved. He's got a plan for our lives. He stirs in the hearts of His people to go and share the gospel. And when the gospel is shared, God grants faith and repentance. And His people come into His kingdom.

And notice how it was done. It was done through the abolishing the food laws. Just as there are no longer any unclean foods anymore, neither are there unclean people anymore. The gospel is for all who believe. From every tribe and tongue and people and nation (Revelation 5:9), they all will be represented before the throne of God.

Now, before you think that God is done with diets, think again. Because, **there is a Christian diet**. Turn with me to John 6. This is a chapter filled with many of the "hard sayings" of Jesus (John 6:60).

John 6:35-37

"I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.

They grumbled about him (verse 41). Jesus replied, ...

John 6:43-44

Jesus answered them, "Do not grumble among yourselves. No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.

Then, again in verse 48, he repeats the theme:

John 6:48-58

I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."

The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live

because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like the bread the fathers ate, and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.

You must eat the flesh of Jesus to live (verse 43).. You must drink his blood to live (verse 43). These are spiritual words, giving a picture (verses 61-63). It's the same picture of the Lord's Supper, which we will celebrate this morning.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on January 25, 2015 by Steve Brandon.

For more information see [www.rvbc.cc](http://www.rvbc.cc).

---

[1] [http://savvyhomemaking.com/home/trim\\_healthy\\_mama\\_overview\\_start\\_here/](http://savvyhomemaking.com/home/trim_healthy_mama_overview_start_here/)

[2] <http://www.everydayhealth.com/food/the-10-most-famous-fad-diets-of-all-time.aspx#01>; <http://health.usnews.com/best-diet/best-commercial-diets>

[3] <http://www.jewfaq.org/kashrut.htm>

[4] Ibid.