
Paul on the Food Laws

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1 Timothy 4:1–5

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall **depart from the Faith**, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of [demons];

Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their **conscience seared with a hot iron**;

Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from [foods] which God hath created to be received *with thanksgiving* of them which believe and know the **Truth**.

For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received **with thanksgiving**:

For it is **sanctified by the *Word of God*** and prayer.

It is clear that Paul is here upholding God's food laws contained in the Scriptures. For instance, Paul states that foods are good because **sanctified** by Scripture (the Word of God). This implies that, for instance, snakes, spiders and pigs are not even food, because *not* sanctified by Scripture. It is, of course, also obvious that it is impossible to sanctify something by prayer which is *not* sanctified by Scripture.

Recalling Acts 21, in which Paul made a solemn vow on the Word of God that he kept the Torah Law in every detail, including the food laws, we see that Paul is indeed reiterating his well-known belief and teaching on the Word of God, which includes those very laws on what is food and what is not food.

Paul introduces the subject by talking about how in the latter times—which, not to put too fine a point on it, includes the present time—some shall depart from the Faith defined in Scripture, and these people shall listen to deceiving messages (called 'spirits' here and elsewhere in the Bible) and the doctrines of demons.

The Word of God to which Paul refers in verse five is none other than the Hebrew Scriptures, or what Christians normally refer to as the 'Old Testament'. It is clear that those who reject the Old Testament Scriptures to follow their own teachings, traditions, and doctrines of men, are the ones who are giving heed to, "seducing spirits and doctrines of demons."

To drive home his point, in verse two, Paul talks about these false teachers as being liars and hypocrites, having no conscience remaining because, figuratively speaking, they have seared it with a hot iron (by ignoring their conscience repeatedly over a period of time).

Paul further identifies these people as those who forbid marriage—through ascetic teachings on celibacy most likely, or false teachings on adultery, perhaps—and who teach abstinence from foods which God has allowed (perhaps forbidding eating beef, or even all meat, in what we, today, call vegetarianism).

In verse four, Paul is actually saying that every creature of God *which has been given by God for food*—understood from the context—is to be accepted with thanksgiving! It should not even need to be mentioned that we absolutely do not accept things with thanksgiving that God

has outlawed as food suitable for humans! Therefore, Paul is **not** talking about eating unclean animals, but animals declared clean by the Word of God, such as beef, lamb and poultry, which God has given us for food.

We do not accept poisonous herbs with thanksgiving any more than we accept animals that are not food with thanksgiving! This is true even though the Scriptures say that God gave us **every** green herb to eat! It is understood that the ones that are not food (poisonous) are not to be eaten. God did not give us permission to eat poison! ever.

In verse five, Paul notes that every (clean) food is sanctified by the Word of God. What is the Word of God? and what is 'sanctified'? The Word of God is Scripture (the Hebrew Scriptures, in other words, which is the Old Testament). 'Sanctified' is just another word for 'made holy', and 'holy' means set apart for God or by God. So Paul is saying that the foods we eat are set apart by God in the Old Testament for us to eat. Where does this happen? Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14. Paul is affirming these food laws, and not—as some falsely teach—tearing down those same laws!

The mystery of lawlessness would have us believe that Paul is speaking against God's laws on food, when he is speaking *for* them. These are unstable minds who twist the meaning intended by Paul, taking his words out of context, and blaspheming the Holy Spirit, by making it appear that the Holy Spirit is speaking out against his own laws.

1 Related Scripture

1.1 Paul Keeps the Torah

Acts 21:24 Take them [Paul], and purify yourself with them, and pay their expenses for them, that they may shave their heads. Then all will know that there is no truth in the things that they have been informed about you, but that you [Paul] yourself also walk keeping the [Torah] Law.

Acts 21:26 Then Paul took the men, and the next day, purified himself and went with them into the Temple, declaring the fulfillment of the days of purification, until the offering [animal sacrifice] was offered for every one of them.

1.2 God's Law is Truth

Psalms 119:142 Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and thy Law is the Truth.

Daniel 9:13 As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the Yahweh our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth.

Malachi 2:6 The Law of Truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity.

1.3 Unstable Minds Twist the Letters of Paul to their Own Destruction

2 Peter 3:16 [WEB] as also in all of his letters, speaking in them of these things. In those, there are some things that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unsettled twist, as they also do to the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.

2 Peter 3:16 [KJV] As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

1.4 Paul's Nazirite Vow

At the conclusion of Paul's Nazirite vow, the following is what was going to happen:

Numbers 6:13–14

And this is the law of the Nazirite, when the days of his separation are fulfilled: he shall be brought unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation:

And he shall offer his offering unto Yahweh, one he lamb of the first year without blemish for a burnt offering, and one ewe lamb of the first year without blemish for a sin offering, and one ram without blemish for peace offerings,

Paul Shaves His Head for the Nazirite Vow:

Acts 18:18 And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow.

1.5 Test Everything!

1 John 4:1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit [message, teaching], but test the spirits [messages and teachings], whether they are of God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

2 A Final Warning to the Faithful

Because Satan's deceptions pervade the world, we need to test everything against God's Word and not simply assume that what we have been taught by anyone is true. In many cases, we have been taught lies mixed with truth, and even the Bibles we read have been partially corrupted through having the meanings of a few key words altered so that they are no longer understood for their true meaning by vast numbers of Christians.

It is incumbent upon us to pray unceasingly to the Holy Spirit for guidance.