

Thou Shalt Eat Anything?

By Brick Parrish

Many Christians believe we were given a new commandment – “If it seems right to you, go ahead and do it!” They say that Paul taught we now have freedom to do anything we want. We are under grace, so all things are legal now. We are not under that nasty old law anymore. Peter told us that some of Paul’s writings were hard to understand. So, is it possible that we don’t really understand some of the things he said? Let’s examine some of these things in order to see how this may or may not be true.

*1Co 6:12 **All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.***

Wow! Does this give us license to do anything we want? All we have to do is become believers and we can do everything the pagans do without the consequences. All things are now legal to eat or do? If we are now under grace and cannot sin, then why does Paul go into all his diatribes against sin? Why bother if all things, while maybe not expedient, are now legal for us to do?

Or, Heaven forbid, maybe we really don’t understand what he meant. After all, he had just spoken the following words:

*1Co 6:9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? **Be not deceived:** neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,*

*1Co 6:10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, **shall inherit the kingdom of Yahweh.***

Now this really doesn’t make much sense if we understand it this way. It is legal to do all these things, but if you do, you won’t make it into the kingdom of Yahweh. Obviously, we’re not getting the whole picture. There is a word play here in the Greek that cannot be accurately conveyed in the English language. Perhaps, a better rendering of this would be that **all these things are in Paul’s power to do, but not proper to do so**. Paul made the same argument in chapter 10 about eating things sacrificed to idols.

Paul would hardly be teaching anything that conflicted with Torah. From the way Paul expressed things, the Greek scriptures and our unfamiliarity with Torah, some things have been lost in the translation. A better approach might be to do as Paul did, not necessarily what you think he said to do.

Some like to use Romans 14 to prove they may eat anything now.

*Rom 14:2 For **one believeth that he may eat all things:** another, **who is weak, eateth herbs.***

Rom 14:3 Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which

eateth not judge him that eateth: for Elohim hath received him.

Rom 14:4 Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for Elohim is able to make him stand.

*Rom 14:5 One **man esteemeth one day above another**: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.*

Rom 14:6 He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto Yahweh; and he that regardeth not the day, to Yahweh he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to Yahweh, for he giveth Elohim thanks; and he that eateth not, to Yahweh he eateth not, and giveth Elohim thanks.

These verses are contrasting the eating of clean meats to vegetarianism. They are not saying it is okay to eat anything. Contrary to what some of you might think, Paul never ate a pork chop in his entire life. Another thing to be noted here, there is nothing in these verses about the Sabbath. Some use verse 5, to their own peril, to prove they can establish their own “Sabbath” day on any day of the week. Paul was talking about fasting in this verse. The Jews fasted, according to their own traditions, twice a week on the 2nd and 5th days. Others did not fast on those days or at all. It was a man made tradition, not the commandment of Yahweh to do so. They were not to judge each other if one fasted and the other didn't.

Well, what about verse 14 then?

*Rom 14:14 I know, and am persuaded by the Master Yahshua, that there is **nothing unclean of itself**: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.*

Rom 14:15 But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Messiah died.

Note again, this is a continuation of Paul's exhortation not to judge our brother in his eating habits. Whether anything is unclean of itself or not is debatable. I find it hard to believe Paul is saying a buzzard or a spider, for example, is not unclean of itself. There are many things that are unclean of themselves, so it is doubtful that Paul had in mind unclean things that Yahweh had already placed off limits for food. Whether the things listed in Lev. 11 are unclean of themselves or not, hardly matters, they are unclean to us and forbidden for food because Yahweh said so. Let's move on to another verse that causes problems for some:

*Col 2:16 **Let no man therefore judge you in meat**, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:*

Col 2:17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Messiah

Paul was warning the Colossians they were being judged by deceivers who were trying to impose their paganistic doctrines upon them. Some have tried to say that this proves the Sabbath and food laws were abolished. It does nothing of the sort. The word “therefore” in verse 16 refers to all that he has just told them. He was forbidding the adoption of pagan practices, the commandments and doctrines of men, which would eventually perish.

The only ones who were to judge them was “the body of Messiah.” The little italicized word “is” is not in the Greek in verse 17. The translator obviously didn’t understand what Paul meant and didn’t think you would either, so he added the word “is” to help clarify it for you. Leave out the “is” here and it makes perfect sense (No one is to judge you, but the body of Messiah). See how the addition of punctuation and little italicized words can cloud the whole meaning of a verse.

The things mentioned in verse 16 are called types and shadows of things still to come. The Feasts of Yahweh and the weekly Sabbath represent prophetic events, some of which will be fulfilled when Yahshua returns.

Here is another scripture used to justify eating anything:

1Co 8:8 But meat commendeth us not to Elohim: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse.

1Co 8:9 But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak.

This whole chapter is talking about eating meat sacrificed to idols. Of course, Paul is not talking about eating a pig. He is speaking of meat that would be considered clean according to Lev. 11. If you carefully read verse 8, it says you are not better if you eat it, nor are you worse off if you don’t eat. It is a complete wash, you gain nothing either way.

*1Ti 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**;*

1Ti 4:2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;

*1Ti 4:3 Forbidding to marry, and commanding to **abstain from meats**, which Elohim hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.*

1Ti 4:4 For every creature of Elohim is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving:

*1Ti 4:5 For **it is sanctified by the word of Elohim** and prayer.*

Now, an unlearned person would just read this on the surface and believe it is saying that it is a doctrine of demons to abstain from meats, which Yahweh created for food. All you have to do now is pray over your ham sandwich and Presto! It is now clean. The key is in verse 3, “meats which Elohim created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth”. He tells us what those things are in Lev. Chapter 11. These are the clean things He ordained that we could use for food. **Nowhere in the Word of Yahweh are unclean foods ever sanctified (set apart)**. The unbelievers can eat anything they so desire, but Yahweh’s people are to be set apart (kadosh) unto Him. Your body is the temple of the Ruach HaKodesh, why would you want to defile it by eating unclean things?

If you still believe pork has somehow been sanctified by the word of Yahweh and prayer, then let’s read what Isaiah had to say would take place on the Day of Yahweh.

*Isa 66:15 For, behold, **Yahweh will come with fire**, and with his chariots like a*

whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire.

Isa 66:16 For by fire and by his sword will Yahweh plead with all flesh: and the slain of Yahweh shall be many.

*Isa 66:17 **They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together,** saith Yahweh.*

Note what it does NOT say. "Pork eating Christians won't be wiped out with the pork eating heathen because they will have already been "raptured" out in a secret coming of Yahshua." The problem here is, there will be no secret coming of Yahshua. He told his disciples in Matt. 24:25-26 that he was warning them beforehand, that there would be false prophets that would say his coming would be in secret. Rev. 1:7 plainly states EVERY eye will see him when he returns. So, we're still left with a dilemma. Who are these pork eaters? They're not the Moslems, so who could they possibly be?

Isa 65:1 I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name (or not calling upon my name – how many call upon the name of Yahweh?).

Isa 65:2 I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts;

Isa 65:3 A people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face; that sacrificeth in gardens, and burneth incense upon altars of brick;

*Isa 65:4 Which remain among the graves, and lodge in the monuments, **which eat swine's flesh, and broth of abominable things is in their vessels;***

*Isa 65:5 Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou. **These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day***

Paul tells us who they are.

Rom 10:20 But Isaiah is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me.

*Rom 10:21 But to **Israel** he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.*

According to the Apostle Paul, they are Israel. They are us! When you become a believer, you are grafted into Israel. You become no different than any other Israelite. All the prophecies that apply to Israel now pertain to you. Yahweh has no other people apart from Israel. If you are not Israel, you do not belong to Him PERIOD.

Actually, Isaiah 66: 19-21 also gives us the same information as to the identity of this pork-eating people. The survivors of this group of people will help gather Israel from all nations and present them to Yahweh, as an offering in a clean vessel. He will then take of them for priests and Levites. These are the ones who commonly refer to themselves as Christians. They are lost identity Israelites in dispersion. It doesn't sound like Yahweh is completely pleased with them either. If Yahweh is pleased with the "Church", then He has changed!

Did Messiah say anything about changing the law? Did he condone eating unclean food? Did he ever eat swine's flesh? Some people think he said it was okay to eat anything, so

let's see what he did say. First of all, he made it very clear in his very first recorded sermon that he did not come to change the law (Torah).

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

*Mat 5:18 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.***

That sounds pretty clear, doesn't it? Heaven and earth are still here and all things are not yet fulfilled. So, if he taught anything different, then this statement was not true and we have a big problem and no savior. Remember, the law included the clean/unclean food laws. So, let's look at one scripture that some think was Yahshua's okay to now eat anything.

*Mat 15:9 But in **vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.***

Mat 15:10 And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand:

*Mat 15:11 **Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.***

There it is, the smoking gun... Yahshua plainly states that it isn't what you eat that defiles you, but what comes out of your mouth. So, now you can go eat your ham sandwich, it doesn't defile you anymore. I guess what he is saying here then, is that anyone teaching you that it is forbidden to eat pork is teaching man's commandments.

If you just listened to these Christian sound bytes, taken out of context, you would get that same impression. But, why not read the whole chapter to see what he is talking about. The "commandments of men" that Yahshua referred to was about washing your hands before you eat. This is what the whole thing is about. Was this a commandment of Yahweh or of man? Yahshua clarifies this a few verses later.

Mat 15:19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:

*Mat 15:20 These are the things which defile a man: **but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man***

It is clearly a doctrine of man. Compare the Mark chapter 7 version of this account.

What about Peter's vision in Acts Chapter 10, wasn't Yahweh showing him that it was now okay to eat all those abominable things?

Act 10:10 And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance,

Act 10:11 And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth:

Act 10:12 Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.

Act 10:13 And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat.

Act 10:14 But Peter said, Not so Yahweh; for I have never eaten any thing that is

common or unclean.

Act 10:15 And the voice spake unto him again the second time, **What Elohim hath cleansed, that call not thou common.**

Again, many read these sound bytes and stop right there. Elohim has cleansed all those unclean things, so they are now okay to eat. But, this is not the meaning of Peter's vision. He explains what it meant in verse 28.

Act 10:28 And he said unto them, *Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but Elohim hath shewed me that **I should not call any man common or unclean.***

It wasn't about food at all. It was about Yahweh cleansing the gentiles also by the blood of Yahshua.

Part of our problem is a lack of understanding of the scriptures from a Jewish perspective. If any part of the Renewed Covenant (New Testament) conflicts with Torah, it is to be discarded. Fortunately, it does not conflict. There are areas we don't understand because of a lack of understanding of Torah. We think Paul and Peter are telling us something when the opposite may be true. To the Hebrew mind, unclean things were never even considered to be food. Consider the following scripture from the Torah:

Deu 12:15 Notwithstanding thou mayest **kill and eat flesh in all thy gates, whatsoever thy soul lusteth after,** according to the blessing of Yahweh thy Elohim which he hath given thee: the unclean and the clean may eat thereof, as of the roebuck, and as of the hart.

Did this mean that they could eat anything their soul lusted after? Of course not! That would have been a violation of Torah. However, they could kill and eat of any of the clean animals, two of which were mentioned here. The ritually clean and unclean person alike could eat of them.

We know that the Apostle Paul kept the law, which included the Feasts, the clean food laws, the Sabbath and all that was written in the Torah.

Act 25:7 And when he was come, the Jews which came down from Jerusalem stood round about, and laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove.

Act 25:8 While he answered for himself, **Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Caesar, have I offended any thing at all.**

Paul never taught that the law (Torah) was abolished. He kept it in all its aspects and taught his followers to do likewise. He laid out some initial guidelines for the returning Israelites (gentiles) to begin a full torah walk. He didn't try to lay everything on them all at once. But, from what he did tell them, we can see that the clean food laws and full Torah observance was in view.

Act 15:19 Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to Elohim: (the Greek word “Epistrepho” means to return or come back to)

Act 15:20 But that we write unto them, that **they abstain** from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and **from blood**.

Act 15:21 For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.

The idols and fornication were obvious no-no's, but why the prohibition against things strangled? It is because this was a common way the pagans sacrificed an animal. When an animal was strangled, the blood was never drained from it. In contrast, when an animal was sacrificed by the Jews, its throat was slit with a sharp knife which resulted in a quick painless death for the animal. The blood was then drained as commanded in the Torah. Many gentile (grafted in Israelites) believers still consume blood in violation of Paul's instructions and Torah. Rare steak anyone?

Paul's intentions are clearly in view here. He didn't want to dump everything on them all at once. In verse 21, he explains that they can learn all the other necessary things as they go to the synagogues each Sabbath day.

There is nothing in any of Paul's actions that even remotely suggest he violated Torah. He admonished us to be imitators of him as he followed Yahshua (I Co.4:16). By his own admission, he did not offend in anything at all in the Torah. He was fully Torah observant.

Why would he have taught us otherwise?

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