



Clean Animals (Genesis 7)

Abouna Angelos
St. Raphael & St. John Coptic Orthodox Church
Chapel Hill, NC

March 27, 2019

“You shall be holy to me, for I the LORD am holy and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be mine.” (Leviticus 20:26)

Animals as Food

After the deluge, after the holy family of Noah left the ark, in the formation of this new covenant, meat came to be added as food. The first food was seeds and herbs, but now there was an “advancement” to eat flesh.

For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it... (Romans 8:20)

St. Paul would say the animal kingdom was subjected to death because of a lack of vitality; that vitality was lost because of sin when the ground became cursed and consequently life and sources of life became limited. Humans had to eat more of living creatures in order to continue living.

Christ Himself came and subjected Himself to that same futility, so that He could save those brought under that futility. He became a Lamb for our sake, to be eaten. However, because He is not *under* that curse, He can recover us by us eating his flesh and blood.

Animals as Sacrifice

Now we will talk about animals from the aspect of sacrifice. Animals were not a part of human consumption.

And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD. Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And

the LORD respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. (Genesis 4:3-5)

They used to eat fruit but not animals. Cain brought from the diet of men. Abel brought from the firstborn of the flock to offer to God.

Why raise animals if not to eat?

1. clothing: wool
2. food: milk

Animals in chapter 9 are given to mankind as food. In the movie *Noah*, the evil people are running after an animal and the animals run, and Noah's father says something to the effect that the flesh of an animal has a lot of energy.

Clean and Unclean

Clean and unclean are definitions God gave to man in order to create a separation, a holiness, for His people.

“You shall take with you seven each of every clean animal, a male and his female; two each of animals that are unclean, a male and his female; “also seven each of birds of the air, male and female, to keep the species alive on the face of all the earth. (Genesis 7:2-3)

“Clean” and “unclean” are not spelled out until Leviticus (see Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14:3-21). What is the difference?

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..." (Leviticus 11:1-2)

"You shall not eat any abomination. These are the animals you may eat: the ox, the sheep, the goat, the deer, the gazelle, the roebuck, the wild goat, the ibex, the antelope, and the mountain sheep. (Deuteronomy 14:3-5)

At time of Noah, he was authorized to eat clean and unclean. At time of Israel, he is given only to eat clean.

The food offered to God is clean only. Man was originally able to eat anything. At the time of the making of the nation of God, man was then only allowed to eat of the clean animals.

This diet change was part of the sanctification process that God wants for His people. We are not common. The people of God are not exactly same like everyone on earth. Whatever anybody thinks is good, tasty, the people of God should not be feeling the same way. On a flesh level, this becomes a way to sanctify His people.

When I was in residency in medical school, pharmacy reps used to offer us breakfast and lunch. I was in Englewood Hospital (Mt. Sinai Hospital) in New York, a very Jewish area. I ate some ham that they offered. My teacher started saying, "Ham? Ham?" I said, "Leave me alone; I'm hungry." To my teacher, I was a disgusting person at that moment. She didn't want anything to do with me.

As you know, southeast asian people eat dogs, a part of their diet. Suppose you are working in a hard place, say a mechanic shop,

with a southeast asian person, and you know they ate a dog with their chopsticks, for lunch or dinner, or they ate dog cold-cuts. Now suppose they are sweating, and you are bumping into them as they are working hard and sweating, and their sweat is getting on you. How would you feel? To a person who detests that food, it would be uncomfortable if not an abomination.

Food was one of the ways that the Law of Moses created a separation of God's people. Separation was created by:

1. Sabbath. No traveling, no hard work, no walking more than one mile, must attend synagogue (limited residence of observant Jews to within a one-mile radius around the synagogue).
2. Circumcision
3. Food

Before Moses, man could eat anything. After Moses they were not allowed to eat except of the animals offered to God because they are to be a holy, sanctified people. Further along in time, we are invited to eat of the flesh of Christ; nobody else can eat from it unless they are in that covenant.

Pachomius would say, if the Jews are the holy people, then the Christians are the holy of holies. What is offered to the father? The flesh and blood of the son. The highest separation ever is our sacrifice in heaven, not on the altar.

This is a new struggle with the Church about food separation. Go to Acts 10 and 11. It repeats. Things repeat in Acts. Why do things repeat in Acts?

In order to separate, He included in their ways things that would make them disgusted. Otherwise, they might be attracted to sin. When you separate people by food, they cannot come together ever, they have a natural disgust. They were not supposed to even touch the unclean. It is much more than a law enforced; it becomes a natural disaffinity, a hate.

Why is this repeated? Because this was emphasized in the Jewish mind so much. The Word of God wants to emphasize that this happened.

See Acts 15, the Council of Jerusalem, where they make a decision about these separations, including circumcision.

“We write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood.” (Acts 15:20)

In the Law of Moses, there are three types of laws:

1. Moral. Ten Commandments.
2. Ceremonial. Clean animals, milk and meat, kosher laws, how to keep the sabbath, what is a sabbath travel distance.
3. Civil. Disputes over land, boundaries, property.

At the Council of Jerusalem, they repealed the ceremonial laws and dietary laws and said that we have to be separated by morals. We are beyond the food and eating of certain animals. Remember how Peter was confronted. Today it is not about eating sheep and dogs. We Christians eat shrimp, pork, eel, crab, lobster, pepperoni cheese pizza, all things that are incredibly unkosher and all unclean for Jews.

The Christian says, “I cannot mix myself with anybody who is adulterous, covetous, blasphemous, drunk.”

“You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. (Exodus 20:4)

“You shall not commit adultery. (Exodus 20:14)

In 1 Corinthians 5 there are new separation laws, which are repeated in many places.

I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person. For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside? But those who are outside God judges. Therefore “put away from yourselves the evil person.” (1 Corinthians 5:9-13)

No more is separation by diet and circumcision but by God’s moral code of living. When you have children, you tell them to not associate with immoral kids. What if that kid is fun (smoke, gamble, games, profanity)? What if he is cute and I like him alot?

Salt of the World

Today we are called for a higher separation, beyond the physical separation of what to eat. When God says, “I am going to send you like the salt of the earth and light of the world,” we are actually being called to physically co-mingle with the world.

Ladies: what do you do when you cook soup? If it needs salt, you put salt. The next thing you do: stir, taste. It means that the salt is not clumped in one place. In the old time, God clumped them in the promised land. Whenever they went anywhere, they had to be clumped nearby the synagogue, according to their very wierd dietary habits.

But in the New Covenant, there is no requirement to be clumped. Anybody can go anywere. There is no requirement to be separated by food. In fact, we are called to be co-mingled.

Q: Why is the physical separation done away with?

A: So that the rest of the poeple would be able to taste the salt.

Q: What key made that possible? We need to keep this in our minds and always ask ourselves, What if the salt looses its taste?

A: It will be good for nothing; at least that is the outcome with Islam, Judaism, which are easy to follow for physical people.

What is the key? The Holy Spirit gives the Christian the ability to be distinguished. He is behaving like Christ, very attractive, very precious, something the world never knew before. It is not a dietary law. It is the integrity of behavior. Not by eating but by

separating oneself from that which is contrary to the work of the Holy Spirit; that is why you should never be mixed with adulterers, extortioners (someone who takes money by bullying, by force).

So there is still a separation today. There is. There are certain situations that if we cannot change them, we are going to have to separate. If there is someone who does not care, there are those who would be tempted to say, let them be. However, we cannot “let them be!” We are called to share the gospel with them. If they will not receive the gospel, then some would say, “Leave them be; I don’t want to judge somebody.” However, we ought to be able to recognize good and bad influences, and such recognition is not judgment unto death; it is discernment. If they will not hear the gospel, we are called to shake the dust off our feet and find someone else who will.

Consider when the Holy Spirit descended in Acts 2. We have the feast of unleavened bread. They eat it for seven days to end one year and begin another year, one harvest and another harvest, beginning a new time.

“This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you. (Exodus 12:2)

This is the beginning of the religious year, as if the yeast represents the code of living. As we do in fasting and lent, there is a resolution, as if we are going to live a new life, do something new. So that yeast became a practical way to end one time and begin a new time.¹

¹Q: Why do we have leaven in our Qurban? A: I hate when we over symbolize things. It is just bread. In bread we use leaven. Matsa is for the Jews to say, We are going to get over the Egyptian way of living and live in the desert according to God’s way of living.”

And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation."
(Acts 2:40)

If the Jews are the separated, what are the Christians? The separated from the separated, the holy of the holy.

Our identity is mixed up. We think we belong. We watch a movie and we get taken by it. These things are secular things. When we savor this as a Christian, it is totally different than a holy of holy. Do I think of things with my secular mind, or with my eye that is focused on Christ and his Kingdom?

Food is not only what goes through the mouth. Food is also what goes through the eyes and the ears. What kind of attitude do I have? When I witness for Christ, do I feel that separation or do I become like tasteless one of them? Am I salt that has lost its saltiness (which is then good for nothing but to be trampled underfoot by men)?

If we are not separating physicaly, to whom do we belong?

And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation."
(Acts 2:40)

You are holy people. Act like it. If a person acts like the world, there is a partial denial of Christ in it, and this is very serious. When the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be seasoned? We are the source of taste in this world.

Salt cannot even be used as sand. It's only function is taste.

Holy Food

If clean animals are a sacrifice food fit for God, then we now have a very high, holy food of which nobody foreign can partake. In Hebrews, we learn that we have a table from which not all people can eat.²

We brought a gift on it of which no one else can partake. We are a very special people.

“Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man.”
(Matthew 15:11)

To break the moral code defiles a man—not the ceremonial code.

“For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. These are the things which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man.”
(Matthew 15:19-20)

The dietary laws were meant to support moral laws. They kept the dietary laws and broke the commandments.

Therefore the Holy Spirit gave a better way to create separation, not by circumcision but by keeping away from people who practice immorality even if they are physically family and friends.

²This table will be part of our talk about the book of Exodus and the sacrifices that can be brought to the altar.