

The Law of Moses Diet

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake from a lesson by Kevin Cauley)

Introduction:

A. Lev. 11:46-47

1. What were the restrictions?
2. Why were the restrictions made?
3. Do the dietary restrictions of the Law of Moses have any significance for us today?

B. We are not familiar with these limits

1. Acts 15:28-29; Rom. 15:4

I. WHAT WERE THE DIETARY RESTRICTIONS?

A. Restrictions on large animals - Lev. 11:1-7; Deut. 14:3-8

1. If it parts the hoof (cloven-footed) and chews the cud (ruminant), it may be eaten.
2. There are about 150 species of ruminants, including both domestic and wild species, such as: cattle, goats, sheep, giraffes, yaks, deer, antelope, kangaroos, buffalo, elk, and camels; but not all of them are cloven hooved
3. Specific restrictions: camel, rock badger (coney, hyrax, a type of prairie dog) rabbit, and pig; animals that walk on paws on all fours - v27

B. Restrictions on water creatures - Lev. 11:9-12; Deut. 14:9-10

1. May eat anything that has fins and scales
2. May not eat of anything without fins and scales (catfish, eels, whales, dolphins, sharks)

C. Restrictions on winged creatures - Lev. 11:13-19; Deut. 14:11-18

1. Specific prohibitions (ESV translation): eagle, vulture, kites, falcons, ravens, ostriches, hawks, sea gulls, owls, stork, heron, hoopoe, and bat
2. Remaining birds were acceptable
3. The restricted animals, fish, and birds eat things that are unclean

D. Restrictions on insects - Lev. 11:20-23; Deut. 14:19-20

1. Winged insects that crawl on all fours may not be eaten: cockroach et al
2. May eat those with jointed legs above their feet: locusts, crickets, grasshoppers; in 2/3s of the world, insects are major source of protein

E. Restrictions on crawling animals - Lev. 11:29-31, 41-43

1. Mole rat, mouse, lizard, snake, multiple feet like centipede and millipede

II. WHY WERE THE DIETARY RESTRICTIONS MADE?

A. The scriptures distinguish between clean and unclean, holy and unholy.

1. Lev. 11:44-47
2. Remember how far humankind wandered from God during the Patriarchal age; God needed to re-reveal Himself to man and teach him about good and evil, right and wrong, clean and unclean all over again
3. Humankind needed a clear understanding of this in order to grasp the need for a Savior to cleanse them from their own uncleanness

- B. Israel needed to learn how to make distinctions.
 - 1. They were to be distinct from the nations around them.
 - 2. They needed to recognize that because God was holy, then they must become holy themselves in order to be His children.
 - 3. God used the dietary restrictions to teach this.
- C. Humankind needed to understand good health practices, and unlearn the self-destructive behaviors learned from the pagans
 - 1. Ex. 15:26; Deut. 7:12, 15
 - 2. This was necessary to preserve the seed of Abraham and the lineage of the Christ - Gen. 3:15, 12:3; Deut. 18:15-18; Acts 3:22-23
- D. The purpose of the Law of Moses was to prepare humankind for Christ - Gal. 3:24, 4:4
 - 1. God used both miraculous and ordinary means to accomplish this. The Law of Moses was a non-miraculous way to prepare the world
 - a. Miraculous: conception of Isaac, plagues, Red Sea, manna, quail, water, Jordan
 - b. Non-miraculous: Law of Moses, Ruth and Boaz, Queen Esther

III. WHAT DO THE DIETARY RESTRICTIONS TEACH CHRISTIANS?

- A. The wisdom of God is expressed in dietary science
 - 1. One of the evidences that the Bible could only come from God.
 - 2. Contemporary science confirms that many of the restricted foods contained harmful bacteria, toxins, and parasites.
- B. Manifests the sinfulness of sin - Rom. 7:13
 - 1. Although we are not bound by the restrictions, we must understand that lesson today - Rom. 6:1
- C. Highlights the difference between the holy and the common.
 - 1. Our world tries to blur the line between the holy and the common, in speech, family structure, worship, etc.
 - 2. God still demands that His children be holy
 - a. 1Peter 1:15-16; Heb. 12:14, 5:14
- D. Generates appreciation for liberty in Christ - Acts 15:10-11; Gal. 5:1
- E. Points to the love God has for His people
 - 1. The fact that he placed restrictions on them showed that He wanted the best for them - Heb. 12:6
- F. God used the lifting of these dietary restrictions to show that Gentiles could now be saved - Acts 10:11-15
- G. God has no dietary restrictions for His people today
 - 1. 1Tim. 4:4; Rom. 14:14, 20; 1Cor. 10:25; Titus 1:15

Conclusion:

- A. Rejoice, for we are no longer under the Law of Moses, but are saved by faith in Jesus Christ and free from sin and the old Law - Gal. 3:10-14, 26-29