

Pet Doctrines #3

UNCLEAN MEAT, CANNIBALISM, &

MEAT SACRIFICED TO IDOLS: PART 3

PAUL & JESUS' STATEMENTS CONCERNING FOOD SACRIFICED TO IDOLS HAS BEEN NO SMALL DEBATE, AND HAS CREATED A GREAT CONTROVERSY WITHIN THE CHURCH. EVEN TO THE POINT OF PEOPLE SAYING THAT EVERYTHING WRITTEN BY PAUL SHOULD BE THROWN AWAY. THEY LIKE TO CITE THE SUPPOSED CONTRADICTION BETWEEN HIS AND JESUS' STATEMENTS. BUT UNDER A CLOSER LOOK AND WHEN READ IN CONTEXT, WE WILL FIND NO CONTROVERSY CONCERNING FOOD SACRIFICED TO IDOLS, AND IF CHRISTIANS SHOULD EAT SUCH FOOD PRODUCED BY PAGAN RELIGIOUS PRACTICES.

FOOD SACRIFICED TO IDOLS <THE CONTROVERSY> THE EARLY CHURCH, PAUL & JESUS

In the book of Acts, the early Church was dealing with a false doctrine that you had to become a Jew through circumcision, thus obeying the Levitical law, to then become a Christian. The matter was settled upon the lines of staying away from the pagan practices and feasts. Let us read:

[ACTS 15:1-2](#) "Some men came down from Judea and taught the brothers, "Unless you are circumcised after the custom of Moses, you can't be saved." (2) Therefore when Paul and Barnabas had no small discord and discussion with them, they appointed Paul and Barnabas, and some others of them, to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders about this question."

✓ The Church Concluded The Following:

[ACTS 15:19-20](#) "Therefore my judgment is that we don't trouble those from among the Gentiles who turn to God, (20) but that we write to them that they **abstain from the pollution of idols, from sexual immorality, from what is strangled, and from blood.**

✓ Paul Was Sent With This Letter:

[ACTS 15:22](#) "Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren:"

The Early Church taught that you did not have to keep the Law of Moses as mentioned in Acts 15:1-2. This is the Levitical law and includes the dietary requirements. As mentioned, there is a difference between the Levitical and Royal Law (the Ten Commandments). See our studies for more information and the differences of the “Royal” and “Levitical Law.”

ACTS 15:24 “Because we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, ‘You must be circumcised and keep the law,’ to whom we gave no commandment;”

● **The Word Used Here For Law is As Follows: G3551 – nomos -**

From a primary word νέμω nemō (to parcel out, especially food or grazing to animals); law (through the idea of prescriptive usage), generally (regulation), specifically (of Moses [including the volume]; also of the Gospel), or figuratively (a principle): - law.

ACTS 15:25-29 “we have unanimously decided to choose men to send to you along with our dear friends Barnabas and Paul, (26) who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. (27) Therefore we are sending Judas and Silas who will tell you these things themselves in person. (28) For it seemed best to the Holy Spirit and to us not to place any greater burden on you than these necessary rules: (29) **that you abstain from meat that has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what has been strangled and from sexual immorality.** If you keep yourselves from doing these things, you will do well. Farewell.” **And Genesis 9:4-5, as this was before the first Covenant Levitical Law, or even a Jew. See also: Deuteronomy 12:23-25**

☒ **Jesus Also Declares This To Be Wrong.**

REVELATION 2:14 “But I have a few things against you: You have some people there who follow the teaching of Balaam, who instructed Balak to put a stumbling block before the people of Israel **so they would eat food sacrificed to idols and commit sexual immorality.**”

REVELATION 2:20 “But I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and by her teaching deceives my servants **to commit sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols.**”

Notice How These Two Statements Mirror Each Other.

ACTS 15:19-20 “Therefore my judgment is that we don’t trouble those from among the Gentiles who turn to God, (20) but that we write to them that they **abstain from the pollution of idols, from sexual immorality, from what is strangled, and from blood.**”

CAN PAUL BE TRUSTED?

So, before we move onto what Paul wrote on the subject, let’s look into the life and calling of Paul and his qualifications as it were. Then we will dive into the supposed contradiction and controversy.

■ **Paul Was Called By Jesus Himself.**

[ACTS 9:3-7](#) “And in the going, he came nigh to Damascus, and suddenly there shone round about him a light from the heaven, (4) and having fallen upon the earth, he heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why me dost thou persecute?' (5) And he said, 'Who art thou, Lord?' and the Lord said, 'I am Jesus whom thou dost persecute; hard for thee at the pricks to kick;' (6) trembling also, and astonished, he said, 'Lord, what dost thou wish me to do?' and the Lord said unto him, 'Arise, and enter into the city, and it shall be told thee what it behoveth thee to do.' (7) And the men who are journeying with him stood speechless, hearing indeed the voice but seeing no one,”

■ **Paul Was Called & Taught By Jesus.**

[GALATIANS 1:1](#) “Paul, an apostle (not from men, nor through man, **but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father**, who raised him from the dead),”

[GALATIANS 1:11-12](#) “But I make known to you, brothers, concerning the Good News which was preached by me, that it is not according to man. (12) **For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ.**”

[GALATIANS 1:15-19](#) “and when God was well pleased—having separated me from the womb of my mother, and having called me through His grace— (16) to reveal His Son in me, that I might proclaim him good news among the nations, **immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood, (17) nor did I go up to Jerusalem unto those who were apostles before me, but I went away to Arabia, and again returned to Damascus, (18) then, after three years** I went up to Jerusalem to enquire about Peter, and remained with him fifteen days, (19) and other of the apostles I did not see, except James, the brother of the Lord.”

■ **Please Note That Paul Was Blind For 3 Days.**

[ACTS 9:8-9](#) “and Saul arose from the earth, and his eyes having been opened, he beheld no one, and leading him by the hand they brought him to Damascus, (9) and he was three days without seeing, and he did neither eat nor drink.”

■ **Please Note That Paul Went Away For 3 Years, Apparently To Be Taught Of The Lord By God.**

[GALATIANS 1:18](#) “then, after three years I went up to Jerusalem to enquire about Peter, and remained with him fifteen days, (19) and other of the apostles I did not see, except James, the brother of the Lord.”

■ **Please Note The Prophetic Significance Of This. In The “Day For A Year” Standard in Bible Prophecy. Paul Was Blind For 3 Days- He Had To Spend 3 Years Getting His Spiritual Sight Back.**

[NUMBERS 14:34](#) “After the number of the days in which you spied out the land, even forty days, for every day a year, you will bear your iniquities, even forty years, and you will know my alienation.’

EZEKIEL 4:6 “Again, when you have accomplished these, you shall lie on your right side, and shall bear the iniquity of the house of Judah. I have appointed forty days, each day for a year, to you.”

This Was Done To Humble Them. As I Believe It Was Done To Paul.

DEUTERONOMY 8:2 “You shall remember all the way which Yahweh your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, to prove you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments, or not.”

Paul Was Never Fully Recovered In Sight To Keep Him Humble.

2 CORINTHIANS 12:7 “Even because of the extraordinary character of the revelations. Therefore, so that I would not become arrogant, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to trouble me – so that I would not become arrogant.

■ **Paul Was Called By Jesus & Endorsed By Peter**

Please also note that Peter was present at this meeting on Food Sacrificed To Idols, and the debate on if you have to become a Jew to become a Christian.

Peter Was Present.

ACTS 15:7 When there had been much discussion, Peter rose up and said to them, “Brothers, you know that a good while ago God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the nations should hear the word of the Good News, and believe.

Peter Regarded Paul’s Writings As Scripture.

2 PETER 3:15-16 “Regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given to him, wrote to you; (16) 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.”

So A Quick Recap: Paul was present with Peter at the original discussion on the matter. Paul, with others, delivered the letters from the church. Paul was called by Jesus Himself. Paul was apparently taught by Jesus, either physically or spiritually. Peter valued Paul’s writings and referred to them as Scripture or Holy written. Not to mention, Paul wrote about half of the New Testament. So, as we can see, Paul is trustworthy and a reputable source of information- an Apostle of God.

IS PAUL’S TEACHING CONTRADICTING THE EARLY CHURCH AND JESUS?

Paul was there with the early church when the directive was given to abstain from foods sacrificed to idols, blood, and sexual immortality. We have Jesus pointing out in the book of Revelation an error in teaching, encouraging His Body to partake in the religious practices of the pagans. By joining in the sexual acts and eating the meat of the sacrificed animals during those acts. So, we will now read what gives some people indigestion:

■ **Let's See What Paul Was Teaching On The Subject.**

1 CORINTHIANS 8:1-13 "With regard to food sacrificed to idols, we know that "we all have knowledge." Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. (2) If someone thinks he knows something, he does not yet know to the degree that he needs to know. (3) But if someone loves God, he is known by God. (4) **With regard then to eating food sacrificed to idols, we know that "an idol in this world is nothing," and that "there is no God but one."** (5) If after all there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords), (6) yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we live, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we live. (7) But this knowledge is not shared by all. **And some, by being accustomed to idols in former times, eat this food as an idol sacrifice, and their conscience, because it is weak, is defiled.** (8) Now food will not bring us close to God. **We are no worse if we do not eat and no better if we do.** (9) But be careful that this liberty of yours does not become a hindrance to the weak. (10) **For if someone weak sees you who possess knowledge dining in an idol's temple, will not his conscience be "strengthened" to eat food offered to idols?** (11) So by your knowledge the weak brother or sister, for whom Christ died, is destroyed. (12) If you sin against your brothers or sisters in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. (13) For this reason, if food causes my brother or sister to sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I may not cause one of them to sin."

It almost appears that Paul is now contradicting the Early Church, the letter he helped to deliver, and Jesus in Revelation. Yet, if we take in the full council of his writings, we will fill in a murky picture. Cherry picking statements without full context can lead misguided people to come to fatal conclusions. As we read, you will see the full teaching Paul was presenting.

Yet Paul Also Says the Following:

2 CORINTHIANS 6:14-18 "Don't be unequally yoked with unbelievers, for what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? (15) What agreement has Christ with Belial? Or what portion has a believer with an unbeliever? (16) What agreement has a temple of God with idols? For you are a temple of the living God. Even as God said, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they will be my people." (17) Therefore "'Come out from among them, and be separate,' says the Lord. 'Touch no unclean thing. I will receive you. (18) I will be to you a Father. You will be to me sons and daughters,' says the Lord Almighty."

EPHESIANS 5:5-12 "Know this for sure, that no sexually immoral person, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and God. (6) Let no one deceive you with empty words. For because of these things, the wrath of God comes on the children of disobedience. (7) Therefore don't be partakers with them. (8) For you were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord. Walk as children of light, (9) for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth, (10) proving what is well pleasing to the Lord. (11) Have no fellowship with the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but rather even reprove them. (12) For the things which are done by them in secret, it is a shame even to speak of.

As we can see, Paul is setting up a division here- a line of meeting the needs of the flesh through gathering food from available sources, and actively participating with those sources. By calling the body to common sense concerning food, and calling the body to spiritual purity concerning worship.

SO, PAUL VS. JESUS?

What appears like a contradiction is not really one at all. Jesus is directly talking about participating in the worship acts of Pagans and heathens. Note: He said Eating Sacrificed Animals **AND** sexual contact. Also, we should notice the direct link given by Jesus to show this point of Balaam teaching. If we look at this act and compare it to Paul's description of getting a bite to eat. They show us two very different activities. As the animals sacrificed in the temple were often sold to the public for meals.

1 CORINTHIANS 10:23-31 "Everything is lawful," but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is lawful," but not everything builds others up. (24) Do not seek your own good, but the good of the other person. (25) **Eat anything that is sold in the marketplace without questions of conscience,** (26) for the earth and its abundance are the Lord's. (27) If an unbeliever invites you to dinner and you want to go, **eat whatever is served** without asking questions of conscience. (28) But if someone says to you, "This is from a sacrifice," do not eat, because of the one who told you and because of conscience – (29) I do not mean yours but the other person's. **For why is my freedom being judged by another's conscience?** (30) If I partake with thankfulness, why am I blamed for the food that I give thanks for? (31) **So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God.**

I believe Paul was talking about eating meat sold as food, for the sake of just eating, while Jesus was referencing the act of participating in the religious acts of sexual sin and sacrifice. One was being a participant in the acts of worship; the other is eating the food that was left in the aftermath of the acts of worship.

As we look again at the statement of Jesus and consider the context, and that the doctrine of Balaam of participating in acts of worship to turn their heart away from God. Then to Paul's clear teaching of just being able to eat, and Paul's demands to remain separate from the unclean things and people. I believe we can understand in proper context the difference and how Paul and Jesus remain in harmony.

■ **Jesus Said:**

REVELATION 2:14 "But I have a few things against you: You have some people there who follow the teaching of Balaam, who instructed Balak to put a stumbling block before the people of Israel **so they would eat food sacrificed to idols AND commit sexual immorality.**"

See: Numbers Chapters 25 - Chapters 31

REVELATION 2:20 “But I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and by her teaching deceives my servants **to commit sexual immorality AND to eat food sacrificed to idols.**”

We find a wealth of information on the intent in the context of the statement. The combining of the food sacrifice, then eating, AND committing sexual acts is clearly referencing active participation in pagan acts of worship.

I believe this goes back to the call of God to not be like the pagan nations, and do not do what the pagans do and say it is for God. As we find the following scriptures:

DEUTERONOMY 12:29-32 “When Yahweh your God cuts off the nations from before you, where you go in to dispossess them, and you dispossess them, and dwell in their land; (30) **be careful that you are not ensnared to follow them, after that they are destroyed from before you; and that you not inquire after their gods, saying, “How do these nations serve their gods? I will do likewise.”** (31) **You shall not do so to Yahweh your God; for every abomination to Yahweh, which he hates, they have done to their gods; for they even burn their sons and their daughters in the fire to their gods.** (32) Whatever thing I command you, that you shall observe to do. You shall not add to it, nor take away from it.”

DEUTERONOMY 18:9-14 “When you have come into the land which Yahweh your God gives you, **you shall not learn to imitate the abominations of those nations.** (10) There shall not be found with you anyone who makes his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, one who uses divination, one who practices sorcery, or an enchanter, or a sorcerer, (11) or a charmer, or a consulter with a familiar spirit, or a wizard, or a necromancer. (12) **For whoever does these things is an abomination to Yahweh.** Because of these abominations, Yahweh your God drives them out from before you. (13) You shall be perfect with Yahweh your God. (14) For these nations that you shall dispossess listen to those who practice sorcery and to diviners; but as for you, Yahweh your God has not allowed you so to do.”

IN THE SAME WAY WE FIND DURING THE EXODUS.

■ God Said:

EXODUS 20:23 “You must not make gods of silver alongside me, nor make gods of gold for yourselves.”

■ So They Did This When Moses Delayed:

EXODUS 32:1 “When the people saw that Moses delayed in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said to him, “Get up, make us gods that will go before us. As for this fellow Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him!”

■ **Aaron Then Tried To Say It Was For The Lord God:**

EXODUS 32:5 “When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it, and Aaron made a proclamation and said, “Tomorrow will be a feast to the LORD.”

■ **Notice How Their Act Of Eating And Drinking As Directly Associated To Their Act Of Worship:**

EXODUS 32:6 “and they rise early on the morrow, and cause burnt-offerings to ascend, and bring nigh peace-offerings; and the people sit down to eat and to drink, and rise up to play.”

1 CORINTHIANS 10:5-9 “However with most of them, God was not well pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. (6) Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. (7) Don’t be idolaters, as some of them were. As it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.” (8) Let’s not commit sexual immorality, as some of them committed, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell. (9) Let’s not test Christ, as some of them tested, and perished by the serpents.”

■ **Again, We See The Intent Of The Act And The Rebellion In The Execution:**

EXODUS 32:8 “they have turned aside hastily from the way that I have commanded them; they have made for themselves a molten calf, and bow themselves to it, and sacrifice to it, and say, These thy gods, O Israel, who brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.”

This is very different from just eating food. Food you had no concert in the sacrifices, no participation with the lewd sexual acts. Paul says eating food, no matter the source, is okay. Jesus says participating in the pagan worship acts and sexual perversion is not okay. Nor is eating the food resulting in your participation in those acts. Especially if done under the pretense that it was for our Lord God. Yet, eating food in the markets, sacrificed in pagan acts, is of no concern to those who are not offended at the idea. You have liberty to purchase for your own physical survival.

Nowhere in Paul’s writings do we see permission given to participate in the act of pagan sacrifice, to sleep with temple prostitutes, or any other act of worship, as Jesus and the early church warned against. What we do find in his writings is a call to remain pure, separate ourselves from the world, and not have fellowship with the works of darkness.

ROMANS 14:1-4+6B “And receive him who is weak in the faith, but not to judgments of your thoughts. (2) For indeed one believes to eat all things; but being weak, another eats

vegetables. (3) Do not let him who eats despise him who does not eat; and do not let him who does not eat judge him who eats, for God has received him. (4) Who are you that judges another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. But he will stand, for God is able to make him stand.... (6b) He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, does not eat to the Lord, and gives God thanks.”

CLOSING:

[1 CORINTHIANS 5:9-13](#) “I wrote to you in my letter to have no company with sexual sinners; (10) yet not at all meaning with the sexual sinners of this world, or with the covetous and extortionists, or with idolaters; for then you would have to leave the world. (11) But as it is, I wrote to you not to associate with anyone who is called a brother who is a sexual sinner, or covetous, or an idolater, or a slanderer, or a drunkard, or an extortionist. Don’t even eat with such a person. (12) For what do I have to do with also judging those who are outside? Don’t you judge those who are “within? (13) But those who are outside, God judges. “Put away the wicked man from among yourselves.”

IF WE CAN LOOK AT THE ISSUE WITH SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT AND COMMON SENSE, THE CONCLUSION BECOMES VERY CLEAR. WE LIVE IN A FALLEN WORLD. MANY OF THE GOODS AND SERVICES PURCHASED BY CHRISTIANS ARE FROM SERVANTS OF A FALLEN WORLD, WHO WORSHIP GODS OF THEIR OWN MAKING- FROM WEALTH, PRESTIGE, INFLUENCE, AFFLUENCE, AND POWER. WE KNOW AS BELIEVERS, THERE ARE ONLY TWO OPTIONS: WORSHIP GOD OR SATAN. IF WE HAD TO GIVE UP EVERYTHING THAT WASN'T PRODUCED FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF BRINGING GOD GLORY, THEN THE VAST MAJORITY OF GOODS COULD NOT BE PURCHASED. AS MOST MAJOR COMPANIES SUPPORT AND ACTIVELY FUND FORBIDDEN PRACTICES BY GOD, EVEN ABOMINATIONS BEFORE THE LORD. SOME EVEN OPENLY WORSHIP SATAN. THE VERY MONEY USED TO PURCHASE THESE GOODS HAS OCCULTISM AND SATANIC SYMBOLS INSCRIBED ON THEM, AND WE WALK AROUND WITH THESE NOTES IN OUR POCKETS. WE WORK AT JOBS TO BE PAID WITH THESE VERY THINGS. GOD IS NOT IGNORANT OF OUR SITUATION AND THE PLACE WE RESIDE AS WE WAIT HIS RETURN. WE ARE CALLED TO BE IN THE WORLD, BUT NOT OF IT. RETAINING OUR PURITY, YET AT THE SAME TIME, STILL FUNCTION WITHIN THE WORLD SYSTEM TO SPREAD THE GOSPEL.