

Message #8 of *Scripture Beneath The Surface*

“Are You a Clean Animal?”

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Let's start out with the scripture in James, chapter 1, and see if we can answer the question, "Are you a clean animal?" It says in verse 13, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither does he tempt any man:"

I'd like to draw your attention to the last phrase, "neither does he tempt any man:" This is a fundamental truth. God does not tempt. I don't think there is anyone who believes otherwise. So, if you believe that God would never tempt anyone to do anything wrong, then you have a basis by which you can determine the truth concerning another portion of Scripture. Let's go there. Look in Acts, Chapter 10, where we find Peter at the house of Cornelius. If you are familiar with this portion of Scripture, you know that Cornelius was a Gentile, which, incidentally, means, a non-Jewish person. Gentile is a term which designates anyone who was not under the label of God's chosen people, the Israelites.

Focus your attention on Peter's experience on the rooftop, when he fell into a trance and saw a sheet coming down from heaven filled with all manner of animals; both clean and unclean. For those of you who are not familiar with the concept of an unclean animal, under the Law of Commandments there were some animals that an Israelite could not eat. They were considered unclean if they did not both chew their cud, and have a split hoof.

But God spoke to Peter and said, "rise and eat." At this time, the Jews who had accepted Jesus Christ were still learning the concepts between the old Law of Commandments and the new Law of Grace. Peter was still under the assumption that it was wrong to eat animals if they didn't both ruminate and have a split hoof. Now, if it was still a sin for Peter to eat those animals, then, God would have been tempting Peter to do something wrong. After reading James 1:13, which said, "neither does he tempt any man," we must come to the conclusion that it was no longer

wrong to eat animals that did not ruminant and have a split hoof, otherwise it would be a clear incident of God tempting man, and we know this is impossible.

The reason God told Peter to rise and eat the unclean animals was because the animals which were designated as unclean represented a class of people who were unacceptable to God. The unclean animals were representative of all those nations who were not Jews, and therefore not under covenant with God. But the Law of Commandments had been brought to the conclusion of its purpose, for Jesus had fulfilled it. The gentiles were now allowed to come to God through Jesus Christ, the unclean animals were no longer to be shunned.

So, we have another question, "why was the Commandment to abstain from certain meats given in the first place? There are many who say that the reason God originally gave these commandments, was for health reasons, and claim that eating certain kinds of meat, or eating meat at all, is bad for you. But notice in 1 Kings 17:4, that God is speaking to Elijah, and tells him that he has commanded the ravens to feed him. In verse six we see that the ravens brought him bread and flesh. If God did not want man to eat flesh, then why would God specifically provide flesh to Elijah? My conclusion is that God never does anything wrong, therefore, the eating of flesh is acceptable to God.

There are various groups inside and outside of the church which teach that either all meat is taboo, or that we are still under the Law of Commandments when it comes to eating meat. Concerning those who believe that eating any meat is wrong, we have two General groups. One group is those who are Buddhists, Hindus, or other non-Christian religions. Because the Bible means nothing to them, we will leave them to themselves. The other group contains those who confess to be Christians, but for various reasons claim Biblical authority for their belief.

I'm not interested in trying to convince this group of people that they are wrong, either. As it says in Romans 14:1-10, "let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." However, I think they could benefit from verse #1, where it refers to those that eat herbs because they are weak in the faith. But what I am interested in is two things. The first thing is, that you who may be confronted with various doctrines concerning the eating of meat, might not be pulled back under the Law of Commandments after you have found your freedom in Jesus Christ, and the second thing is, that you come to a knowledge of what the original Law concerning unclean animals symbolized for those of us who are now under the Law of Christ.

First of all, please notice that the Law which was written on tables of stone, was given to the children of Israel, and not to the Gentiles, and in Acts 15:10, it was determined by the leaders in Jerusalem not to saddle Gentiles with the Law. This is because the Gentiles were not called under the Law, only the Jews were. Also, the Law was given to bring man to an understanding of their sinfulness. When Jesus came, he fulfilled the Law of Commandments. Fulfill, does not mean that God changed his mind, and that the commandments did not work, but that their purpose had been accomplished, for the intent of the law was to bring mankind to a place where they could receive the manifestation of God in the Earth in the form of Jesus Christ, and therefore come to a greater comprehension of heavenly things.

Yet, just because we are no longer under the Law of Commandments, does not mean that the concepts within the Law did not apply to us. The concepts must not be disregarded, but we must

allow God to take us past the shadow pictures of the Old Testament, and reveal another level of understanding. Humans, must be brought into the knowledge of a spiritual God. And God, in his wisdom, has brought us, in progressive stages, to a clearer comprehension of heavenly things.

Hebrews 8:5, refers to the shadow of heavenly things. Although we have progressed in our understanding, we still only see as if we were looking through dark glass, as referred to in 1 Corinthians 13:12. However, God does not want us to stay in our present state of darkness, but to continually progress toward the light. Although the Old Testament Hebrews looked at everything at face value, we who are living in these last days should have our spiritual eyes and ears open. By this current time, as we approach the end of the world, we should be able to see much more than the types and symbols which previous generations could see. We need to have minds that are transformed from ignorance to understanding. Let me give you some suggestion of what you might see as a deeper level of understanding concerning meat.

Remember that a clean animal, under the Law, both chewed the cud, and had a split hoof. The underlying implication is that man was created with a fleshly nature. An animal nature, which must be overcome, so that man would rise to become a spiritual being, born-again, born of the Spirit. God is a spirit. In order for man to become one with God, he must leave that animal nature behind, that beast nature. In order to do this, he must come into the knowledge of what it means to be a spirit being. The wicked people of this world will remain as brute beasts, for they will not comprehend the fullness of God as a spirit. But those who will seek God with all their heart, all their soul, and with all their strength, will come to know God.

But the mind of an animal cannot comprehend God. A brute beast does not use reason. Therefore, if you are not a brute beast, and truly are seeking God, then in your progressive walk with Christ, you will seek to transform your mind into that which can comprehend spiritual things. Therefore, when you hear or read the word of God, you will not just read it or hear it, and lay it aside, but you will contemplate it. You will 'ruminate' on the word. You will chew your cud. As King David frequently says in the Psalms, Selah. The word, Selah, means to pause and think about that. In Christian circles this separates the men from the boys. Christians who never progress past the surface layer of Scripture, don't spend much time pondering the word of God. As we progress from our animal nature, we must be like clean animals of the Old Testament, in that we get the most out of our food.

In the other perspective, a clean four footed animal was required to have a split hoof. Four footed animals with split hooves were designed by God to walk on solid ground. They were not designed to walk in mud and mire, nor in low land swampy areas. Neither are Christians. The Bible makes many references to miry clay, and that God's people should stay out of it and on solid ground. But the animal nature in man, the beast nature, is very strong, and the temptation to go down into places you should not go is difficult to resist. Why? What does the miry clay symbolize? We know that the solid rock is Jesus Christ. Well, the opposite of solid rock is to be drowned in the waters of destruction. Miry clay and swamps are the place where Satan wants Christians to go. He entices them to leave their solid footing and go to the middle ground which borders the deep waters. The water of the sea symbolizes the destructive doctrine of Satan's lies in the earth. All through the Old Testament scriptures, which tell us the story of Christ, any salt water or brackish swampy water, or contaminated water, symbolizes that which will not quench your thirst, but will poison you; will destroy you; will drown you. 1 Timothy 6:9 says, "But they

that desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in ruin and destruction.”

Think of this. The Bible describes Satan as Leviathan, the sea monster. Leviathan is that original beast nature which was first found in Lucifer. The waters he lives in are the lies of Satan which oppose the word of God. Satan, in the form of Leviathan, is prevented from spreading his doctrine, symbolized by the sea, past the borders that God set for the oceans, for, as referred to in Job 38:8-11, God has set bars and doors for the sea that it cannot pass and overwhelm the solid ground. God will not allow Satan to spread his lies over the whole earth and drown all men in perdition; in destruction. Satan responds by sending out his temptations to mankind in the form of worldly delights. A short representative list of these is described in Revelation 18:11-13. His intent is to lure men down from their places of solid ground, and eventually get them deep enough into the mire where he can pull them into the sea of destruction and drown their souls.

In following the symbolic line of thought that Satan’s anti-God and anti-Christ doctrine is the sea, the merchants’ method of provision is by ship. The ships cannot go past the borders of the sea, so must bring their merchandise to port cities; cities which are at the lowland coastal areas. From there, Behemoth takes over. Yes, I know what the theologians have suggested for behemoth, but equating an alligator or hippopotamus with the description given in Job 40, is ridiculous.

The term ‘behemoth’ is a word which refers to animal in general. It simply means ‘beast’ as an all encompassing term. It is THE beast. It is the animal nature of man, who, although it cannot survive in the waters of the sea, makes its home in the swamps and glens of the lowlands. In other words, it lives by the sea in the muck and mire. It is symbolic of those people of earth who desire to be as close as possible to the merchandise of the world which the sea offers. This beast nature of man desires to stimulate the flesh, and has no desire to stimulate the spirit.

If you’re a Christian, then you should be acceptable to God. You should be as a clean animal, one which is designed to walk on solid ground. When you feed on the word of God, it should be like sheep which are made to eat the lush grasses of the pasture. You should also be like the sheep that ruminate. You should ruminate on the word of God. You should think about what you hear and what you read, so that you may clearly understand what God wants you to apply to your life. The nature of man, that beast nature of behemoth, is strong. The temptation to partake of earthly things is great. God promises in his word that he will not give us more than we are able, and therefore, has set a boundary on the sea. In other words, he will not allow Satan’s lies to overwhelm us. However, if we begin to pursue earthly things rather than spiritual things, we will gradually be pulled into the sea of destruction. Our place is not the muck and mire of the low land, but as King David spoke in Psalms 40:2, that we are to be brought up out of the miry clay and our feet set upon a rock.

We know that Christ Jesus is our solid rock. But Christians who think they can play with worldly things, who are more interested in things that will stimulate the flesh than in things that will stimulate the spirit, are really like the swine. Under Old Testament law, pigs were considered to be extremely defiled. Pigs represent people who call themselves Christians, and should have their feet placed on the solid rock. But pigs don’t ruminate, and their favorite place is the muck and mire. The reason that swine were considered to be such an abomination in the

eyes of the Lord, is that their great bulk and little feet require more solid ground than other four footed animals. In addition to that, they not only wander into the miry clay, but wallow in it. They are more at home in the mud than out of it. If you call yourself a Christian, but act like a swine, God will take no pleasure in you.

What kind of an animal are you? Are you clean in God's eyes, or are you unclean. Do you stay away from the miry clay, dwelling on things which stimulate your spirit, or do you pay more attention to that which stimulates your flesh. Many people who claim to be Christians profess that the love of their life is Jesus. But their manner of life belies the fact, for they wallow most of the time in the muck of this world, and only occasionally come to the solid ground. Their continual abode in the lowlands will eventually allow Satan to pull them into destruction. Because their spirit gets little stimulation and their flesh gets great stimulation, their faith is weak. The lies of Satan will eventually overcome them. The way to be strong is to stay as far as reasonably possible away from the lies of Satan, and to plant your feet firmly on the truth. You don't become strong in the Lord by stimulating your flesh. You become strong in the Lord by stimulating your spirit.

One more thing. We talked about sheep, and how they had a split hoof and ruminated. But goats also have a split hoof and ruminate. But we know that in the end of the world, when Jesus comes, he will separate the sheep from the goats. Goats will be destroyed. The question is sometimes asked, why, if goats are part of the flock, why would they be destroyed?

Think of this. The word for sheep comes from the concept of an animal that grazes, moving steadily forward. Sheep eat this way. They eat the lush green grass of the pasture, grazing, moving steadily forward to eat the grass. Goats also eat, but are described as those animals which do not graze, but rather browse. They leap and prance from one place to another, nibbling here and there. And their food is not the lush green grass, but they delight in coarse food of stalky plants, weeds, and briars. Goats symbolize people in the church who call themselves Christians, but will not apply themselves to the word of God. They like all the unusual doctrines that comes along, the kind that really don't stimulate the spirit, but stimulate the flesh. These are the Get Rich doctrines, the Easy Grace doctrines, the doctrines that encourage what you can get from God, but leave out the teaching of what you should give to God.

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Well, I think I'll stop there. I know I've given you a lot to think about. And I also know that much of what I've said can be very confusing. But I know there are those who are looking below the surface for greater understanding of God's word, and that's the intent of this ministry. We are rapidly approaching the end of the world. True Christians everywhere are realizing this. Everywhere I go, people are saying, "I know we are in the end times. Jesus is coming very soon."

The Bible says that God's people will know when the time draws near. They will know, and understand, but the wicked will not understand. And if you are a Christian, you should realize that the coming of Jesus Christ is for a church without spot or wrinkle. He is coming for a prepared church. Many in the church today are not preparing for Christ's return, but think they can wallow in the mud of Earth's pleasures, until such time as Jesus comes and raptures them. But Jesus promises that he will send Elijah before the great and terrible Day of the Lord. Elijah

will be the same as John the Baptist, in that the message will be to repent for the coming of the Lord is near at hand. It will be a time of showdown, as it was on Mount Carmel in the days of Elijah. The true servants of God will be exalted, and the servants of Baal, the servants of wickedness, will be destroyed. It's time for the church to get out of the muck and mire of fleshly stimulations. Its time to repent, and turn to the Lord. We were designed to stand on solid rock, and to ponder the word of God that we take in. Let others be occupied with the toys of this world, but let Christians begin to act like Christians.