

Deuteronomy 14:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thou shalt not eat any abominable thing.

Analysis

Thou shalt not eat any abominable thing. This general principle precedes the specific dietary laws, establishing that some foods are unsuitable for God's holy people. The word abominable (to'evah) indicates ritual repugnance - these foods are incompatible with covenant holiness.

The dietary laws served multiple purposes: maintaining Israel's ceremonial purity, distinguishing them from pagan nations, teaching principles of separation between clean and unclean, and pointing forward to moral and spiritual distinctions. Though ceremonial, the laws had moral and theological implications.

Reformed theology recognizes these laws as part of the ceremonial system fulfilled in Christ. Mark 7:19 and Acts 10 indicate the New Covenant removes dietary restrictions, as the reality (holiness in Christ) supersedes the shadow (clean foods). However, the principle of avoiding what defiles remains applicable to moral and spiritual pollution.

Paul teaches (1 Corinthians 10:31) that whether we eat or drink, we should do all for God's glory. Though specific foods are no longer unclean, believers still consider how eating habits affect witness and discipleship.

Historical Context

Ancient Israelites lived surrounded by pagan nations with different dietary practices. The kosher laws created visible boundary between covenant people and

their neighbors, reinforcing Israel's distinct identity as holy nation.

These regulations governed daily life, making every meal an act of covenant faithfulness and reminder of Israel's consecration to God.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. What theological purposes did the Old Testament dietary laws serve?
2. How do Christians understand these laws post-Christ and post-Acts 10?
3. What principles about holiness and separation do the dietary laws illustrate?
4. In what areas of life should believers still practice separation from defilement?
5. How does doing all things for God's glory apply to contemporary Christian eating habits?

Interlinear Text

לֹא	תֹאכֶל	כָּל	תּוֹעֵבָה:
H3808	Thou shalt not eat	H3605	any abominable thing
	H398		H8441

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 4:14 (Parallel theme): Then said I, Ah Lord GOD! behold, my soul hath not been polluted: for from my youth up even till now have I not eaten of that which dieth of itself, or is torn in pieces; neither came there abominable flesh into my mouth.

Romans 14:14 (Parallel theme): I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.

Leviticus 20:25 (Parallel theme): Ye shall therefore put difference between clean beasts and unclean, and between unclean fowls and clean: and ye shall not make your souls abominable by beast, or by fowl, or by any manner of living thing that creepeth on the ground, which I have separated from you as unclean.

Leviticus 11:43 (Parallel theme): Ye shall not make yourselves abominable with any creeping thing that creepeth, neither shall ye make yourselves unclean with them, that ye should be defiled thereby.

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