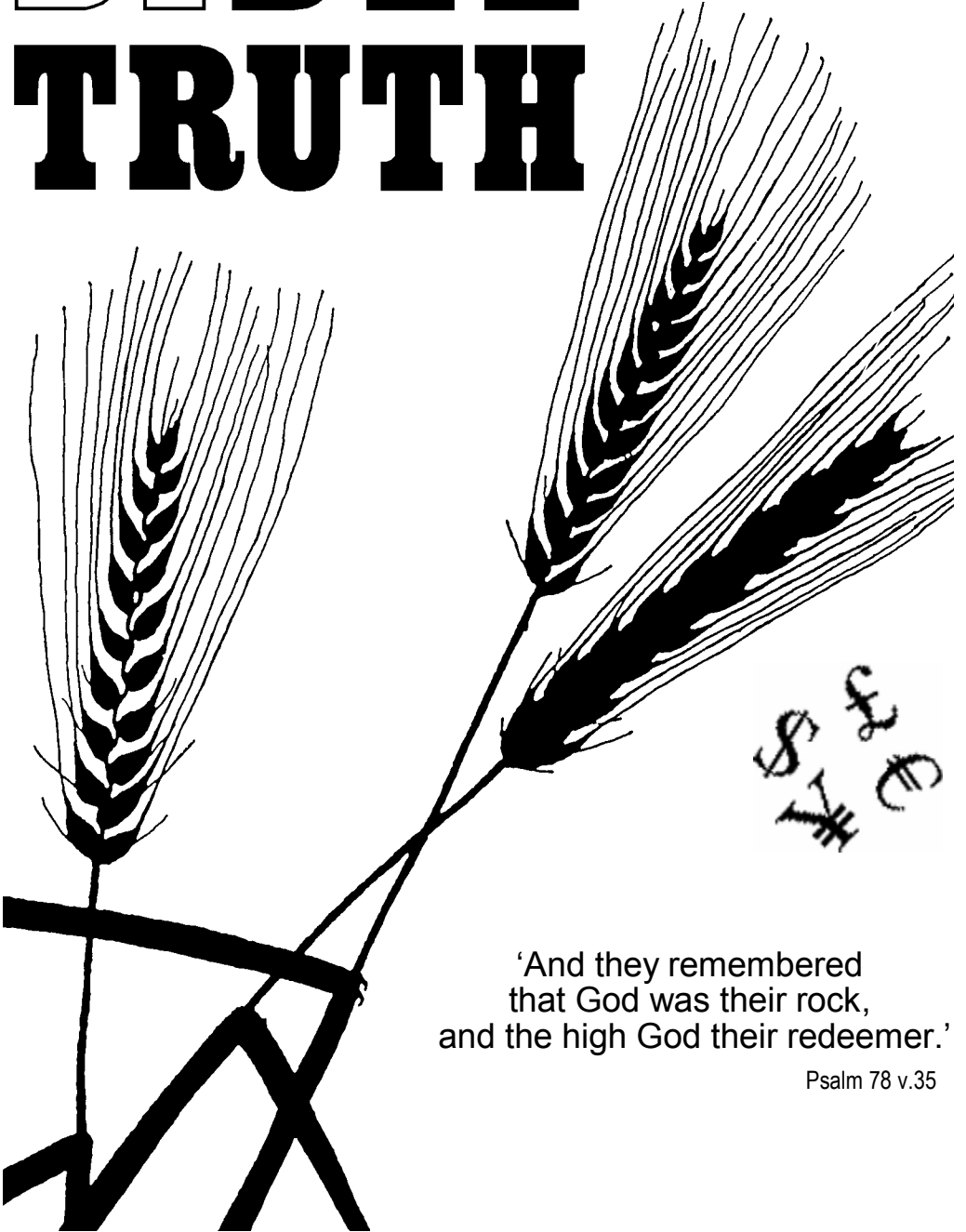


# BIBLE TRUTH

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'And they remembered  
that God was their rock,  
and the high God their redeemer.'

Psalm 78 v.35

# THE WISDOM OF GOD'S FOOD LAWS

by Brooks Alden

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'Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.'

Matthew ch.5 vv.17-18

It never ceases to amaze me when someone can isolate a Bible passage and take it totally out of context. At a recent meeting of a Bible study group, when it was learned that I try to follow the Bible Food Laws, the group leader suggested I was being too legalistic. As far as he was concerned, I just did not understand New Testament passages that abolished the Food Laws codified by Moses at Sinai. Of course, it came as no surprise when he quoted in part Peter's vision in Acts ch.10, for no matter how flimsy; it is the prime proof for those who want to change God's Food Laws. He alluded to the great sheet filled with unclean animals, creeping things and fowls of the air descending from Heaven. He then went on to further his contention by quoting the voice of Acts ch.10 v.13, '... Rise, Peter; kill and eat.' Peter's response in v. 14, '... Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean', and the voice again in v.15, '... What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common'.

For my friend these three verses were all the proof he needed to partake of the shrimp offering at the dinner. Now, I'm no crusader when it comes to food, everyone can make his or her own choice. Still, it is puzzling that he never considered for a moment that Peter obviously did not believe the voice insofar as eating unclean foods; Acts ch.10 v.17 clearly points this out; or that it became clear to Peter that the real meaning of the vision was about men, not animals, and that God was simply showing Peter that he should not call any man unclean (v.28). Notwithstanding whether we like shrimp, pork or lobster, God was not approving a change of diet. This is also the case for other Bible verses quoted to prove forbidden foods acceptable, such as Romans ch.14 v.14, & 1 Corinthians ch.10 vv.25 & 27 or 1 Timothy ch.4 v.4-5. A close analysis of each of these passages will demonstrate that the meaning is other than what the opponents of the Food Laws desire it to be.

The verses from Matthew ch.5 at the outset of this article are the Lord Jesus Christ's own words. He said in the clearest of terms, 'Think not that I am come to destroy the law, ...'. Is it too difficult to believe God the Son? What about when He said, 'If ye love me, keep my Commandments' (John ch.14 v.15). Yet, how many times have we heard theologians say, 'the Law was nailed to the Cross'? It does not seem to matter that Colossians ch.2 v.14 demonstrates it was only the Law of Ordinances that was nailed to the Cross. Through the blood of Jesus Christ these are no longer needed. Yet, such a statement is still taught by those who point out we are not under the Law but under grace and therefore the Law need not concern us. The Book of Malachi ch.3 v.6 tells us, 'For I am the LORD, I change not; ...'. In Paul's epistle to the Hebrews it is said 'Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever' (see Hebrews ch.13 v.8). To my evangelical friend I can only say, yes, we are under Grace but we had better not ignore God's Laws that have been established for our own good.

Let us get away from the idea that the Food Laws represent some religious significance. They were given to us by the Lord God Almighty to keep us healthy. They were in existence before being codified; obviously Noah was aware of them when he was told to take two each of the unclean animals into the ark and seven of each of the clean animals (see Genesis ch.7 vv.2-3). They were codified for the Israelites because God chose these people to take His Order and Law around the world and He wanted them to be healthy and a blessing to the nations as His Grand Plan unfolded. One thing is clear. We only have to reflect on the astronomical growth of the pharmaceutical industry, the vast changes in the medical industry or the continuing emergence of those involved with unclean food production to understand why the huge increase in disease and staggering growth of an infirm society has come upon us, particularly in the past half-century.

Indeed, what do you think would be the response of our governments if an indisputable study were undertaken to show that by following the Bible Food Laws it would result in a healthy, vibrant population? Obviously, it would be ignored; the effect on such places as corporate North America, upon unemployment and finance would be too great for government to face. Just a few years ago, a study undertaken by a western government linking red meat to cancer was buried because the economic results to a chemical fed cattle

industry would be catastrophic. So unfortunately, until our wonderful Lord returns, it is up to the individual to understand that he or she should not listen to those who denigrate God's Food Laws but take the time to look at the benefits themselves. Sadly, even 'clean foods' are no longer clean in the sense that enormous amounts of antibiotics and chemicals are employed in their production. Yet, to those who teach that the Bible Laws have been abolished, the Lord's words following the opening verse should be carefully considered.

'Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: ... '

Matthew ch.5 v.19

The Law is not that complex and frankly, is not too much of a sacrifice to follow. The simple rules established by God make it easy to differentiate the clean from the unclean (see Leviticus ch.11 vv. 3-4 & Deuteronomy ch.14 vv.6-8). Clean animals are those who both chew the cud and have split hooves and would include such animals as sheep, cattle, goats, deer and elk. If an animal does not have both these characteristics, their function is not as a food source but is that as a scavenger of the land, a beast of burden, a source of clothing, or other such purpose. In this unclean group belongs the pig, which has the split hoof but doesn't chew the cud. Think of the huge industry and the popularity of bacon and pork, or the churches that proudly advertise their ham dinners at Easter. Yet, the tissues of the swine swarm with parasites and it has been determined that seven out of ten people who eat pork have trichina antibodies in their blood streams. Unclean animals also include the horse, rabbit, dog, cat, bears and so on. A quick review of the different digestive systems should clearly show the difference. For example, the cow requires twenty-four hours to digest food. It utilizes two digestive processes but the extent of the process screens out impurities that would otherwise be deposited in the flesh and milk. In contrast, pigs digest food in less than four hours so it is easy to understand why they swarm with parasites. Our diet has not been made easier through the introduction of other peoples to our land who grew up to believe the flesh of horses, dogs, rabbits and swine is as nourishing as beef or venison.

Of course, milk, butter and eggs are for our nourishment.

God also made it easy to identify clean water creatures, in that they must have both fins and overlapping scales (see Leviticus ch.11

vv.9-12 & Deuteronomy ch.14 vv.9-10). Trout, salmon, cod and halibut qualify as clean. Crab, lobster, shrimp, oyster, snails, frogs, abalone, turtle, shark, squid, octopus, catfish, and so on are unclean. I well remember my dilemma when I could no longer eat crab, a former favourite delicacy of mine. However, it was made easier when I learned that the crab primarily feeds on rotten carcasses and other garbage. Unclean water creatures are the source of many diseases; of this we can be certain.

God specifies the birds that fall into the unclean category; birds of prey including the eagle, vulture, buzzard, raven, crow, owl, hawk, seagull, water hen, pelican, stork, woodpecker, penguin, parrot, and bats could be included here (see Leviticus ch.11 vv.13-19 & Deuteronomy ch.14 vv. 11-18). Clean birds include chicken, pheasant, grouse, quail, turkey and songbirds. God also forbids us to eat such abominable food as mice, rats, weasels, lizards, snakes, worms and moles. In fact, these latter creatures are considered so unclean that anything their dead bodies touch is unfit for use until thoroughly washed (see Leviticus ch.11 vv.23-25).

By the way, if you are in the mood for a good feed of grasshopper, that's okay.

Various passages covering God's rules for plants and herbs appear in the Bible as well as certain rules when such cannot be eaten (see Genesis chs 1 vv.29, 3 v.18 & 9 v.3, Leviticus ch.19 vv.19, 23-25, Deuteronomy ch.22 v.9). Suffice to say, they cover vegetables, ripe fruits, nuts, grains, etc. Sorry, mushroom lovers, fungus is not on the menu.

I once read that good health goes hand in hand with good food, good thinking and deep breathing habits. When you think about it, this is quite true. The good thing is that we as individuals can control our habits through discipline and as health relates to food, we have the wonderful Laws given us by the Lord God Almighty. As for me, researching for this article has renewed my determination to better my diet. One thing is a certainty. I shall send a copy of this article to an evangelical friend and will also encourage him to review 1 Corinthians ch.11 vv.29-30.

'For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep [die].'

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