

## The Diet of Distinction

### Scripture Reading — Leviticus 11:41-47

*"You must distinguish between the unclean and the clean ... creatures that may be eaten ..." Lev. 11:47 —*

People's diets vary from one culture to another. Rice and beans for breakfast, anyone? A chocolate sauce over chicken? Whale blubber? We often identify our cultures by the foods we eat.

When God separated Israel from the other nations, he gave the people instructions for clean living and working in his presence. At the same time, God designated some of the world's animals as clean. These were for Israel's sacrifices and daily food. God's people were not to eat the meat of unclean animals. Their daily food reminded them of who they were--God's special people.

It's not clear why certain animals were unclean. Health concerns were probably not the issue, because pork and other meats, which were unclean since Moses' day, became acceptable after Pentecost (see Acts 10). Israel's diet marked them as different from other nations. Living by such instructions kept Israel distinguished and clean in God's presence. You could tell God's people by their lifestyle, especially by their daily food.

Jesus teaches that it is not what enters the body but what comes out of the heart that makes us unclean (Mark 7:14-23). And if you think this is easier than keeping away from forbidden foods, just look at Jesus' list: evil thoughts, sexual immorality, greed, malice, deceit, envy, arrogance, and so on.

### Prayer

*Guard my heart in worship today, O Lord, that I may be clean. May my words and deeds let others know I serve you first in all I do each day. For Jesus' sake. Amen.*

**Devotion topics:** [Bible](#), [Books of the Bible](#), [Leviticus](#)

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Written by Arie Leder — <https://today.reframemedia.com/authors/arie-c-leder>

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