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Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

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AN ANALYSIS OF THE METHODS OF INTERPRETATION OF
THE LEVITICUS 11 DIETARY LAWS IN SECOND
TEMPLE AND EARLY CHRISTIAN
NON-CANONICAL SOURCES

A Thesis

Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements of the Degree
Master of Arts in Religion

by

Ani Ionuț Constantin

April 2022

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ABBREVIATIONS

Gen - Genesis

Exod - Exodus

Lev – Leviticus

Deut – Deuteronomy

Judg - Judges

1-2 Chr - 1-2 Chronicles

Ps - Psalm

Prov - Proverbs

Isa - Isaiah

Jer - Jeremiah

Ezek - Ezekiel

Dan - Daniel

Zeph - Zephaniah

Mal - Malachi

Matt - Matthew

Rom - Romans

1-2 Cor - 1-2 Corinthians

Phil - Philippians

Col - Colossians

Heb - Hebrews

Jas - James

Rev - Revelation

1-4 Macc – 1-4 Maccabees

Wis - Wisdom of Solomon

Sir - Sirach/Ecclesiasticus

TP – The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs

LA – The Letter of Aristeas

EGP – The Essene Gospel of Peace

Barn – The Epistle of Barnabas

ANF – Ante Nicene Fathers

NPNF – Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers

AS – The Alexandrian School

OT – Old Testament

NT – New Testament

LXX – Septuagint

MT – Masoretic Text

Acc – According to

Add – Adapted from

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Research

Numerous commentators and theologians have written in recent centuries about clean and unclean animals. These distinctions are also referred to as dietary laws, and they are found in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14. For example, Walter Houston wrote in 1993 in the *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, Supplement Series 140* about the prohibition, its explanation, and its implications; Vic Lockman extended the study through the New Testament in 1997 in his work *The Dietary Laws of the Bible*; and Jordan D. Rosenblum in 2016 in his work *The Jewish Dietary Laws in the Ancient World* articulates his position across multiple time periods and cultures, but his work covers a broader range of dietary laws, including kosher. Regarding the biblical canon's writings – particularly the Old Testament – the prohibition against eating unclean animals remains in place and is accepted as valid throughout by the majority of theologians.

Questions of Research

However, in the Old Testament, it is straightforward to establish the believer's obligations regarding dietary laws. According to the Bible, God does not change (Mal 3:6). However, were the dietary restrictions specified in Leviticus 11 intended to be literal for Christians or even for Jews? If, on the other hand, God intended them to be taken literally, are there additional non-canonical writings that support this

hypothesis? To determine this, we will compare and analyze the texts found in non-canonical writings.

Importance of the Research

Apocryphal writings should not be overlooked. We now have a large number of non-canonical writings (apocryphal, deuterocanonical, and pseudepigraphal writings) and an increasing number of unknown writings, and it is critical to research these writings in order to gain a more complete picture of the thinking of those times. They contain numerous truths that can be gathered, but they also contain some clarifications or novelties that are not always found in the biblical canon – I am specifically referring to the historical writings. If we examine the canonical writings closely, we will notice that several books contain references to apocryphal writings.¹ For instance, the Epistle of Jude contains references to and quotations from the First Book of Enoch,² but there are also other references. According to Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Didymus the Blind, Jude 9 refers to Moses' Assumption. Additionally, Heb 11:35 quotes 2 Macc 7:1-29; Rom 9:21 quotes the Wis 15:7; Jas 1:19 refers to Ecclesiasticus 5:11; Col 1:17 quotes Sir 43:26; Rev 6:9-11 is similar to 4 Ezra 4:35-37 or may even be a citation thereof; Rev 9:7 refers to the Wis 16:9; and in Rev 22:2 we have a pretty clear similarity with The Psalms of Solomon 14:3. Thus, merely quoting them does not confer authority or canonicity on them.³ This textual similarity or citation is unsurprising, as apocryphal texts themselves contain citations.

¹ When we say “apocryphal writings” we also mean deuterocanonical and pseudepigraphal writings.

² In the Epistle of Jude, verse 14 it quotes 1 Enoch 60:8, and in verse 15 it is quoted 1 Enoch 1:9.

³ This book is a pseudepigraphal writing, and is also known as The Testament of Moses.

The Epistle of Barnabas, for example, contains passages from the Wisdom of Solomon. Even the Church Fathers are not averse to referring to or quoting from apocryphal writings. Polycarp quotes Tobit and Ecclesiasticus in this manner; Irenaeus quotes Wisdom of Solomon, Susanna, and Bel and the Dragon. It is critical to emphasize in this context what non-canonical writings have to say about the universal position and validity of dietary laws.

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this research is to ascertain the position of non-canonical authors who wrote about Leviticus 11's dietary laws, and to determine whether these writers advocated for the perpetuity of the distinction between clean and unclean animals or for its abolition. The purpose of this research is not to establish or disprove the validity of the dietary laws in the OT or NT writings, but to discern the position of non-canonical writings on this law. I will do so by analyzing non-canonical passages and comparing them to Leviticus 11 or to the textual methods of interpretation.

Delimitations

Each time the term "biblical canon" is used in this research, it refers to either the Masoretic Text (MT) or the Christian (Protestant) canon, which contains 66 books, 39 of which are in the Old Testament (OT) and 27 in the New Testament (NT). This canon excludes a number of Jewish religious works, including theological and historical works. Additionally, we will concentrate exclusively on writings that refer to the clean/unclean animals mentioned in Leviticus 11 - whether they are deuterocanonical, pseudepigraphal, or Church Fathers' writings. While the purpose of our study is to determine the position of non-canonical writings on dietary laws, we will also highlight the manuscript's history, context, and purpose. Simultaneously, we

will compare those writings to the corresponding passages in the Bible to determine any parallels or differences.

Methodology

To gain a better understanding of the dietary laws and clean and unclean animals as stated in Leviticus 11, it is necessary to begin with an introduction in the first chapter of the research. The dietary laws are described here in terms of its medical implications, as the link between the animal and the ritual, as a test of obedience to God while also serving as a distinguishing feature toward other peoples. It is critical to emphasize Israel's distinction from pagan peoples, in the midst of which there was also the Israelites' reporting to ritual purity or impurity (the use of the root *קָדַשׁ*).

The second chapter discusses the most important writings on clean/unclean animals: Maccabees books 1, 2, and 4 – the only books studied in the deuterocanonical category. There are several references here to the pig and the conscientiousness with which devout Jews adhere to the dietary laws. However, Jews can hold either a universalism or an exclusivism theory, and dietary law plays a significant role in both of these theories, because exclusivists remain faithful even at the cost of their lives, while universalists accept compromise and believe that the dietary laws can be amended. The deuterocanonical books will be analyzed to determine the Israelites' position on the adoption of one of the previously mentioned theories.

Along with the deuterocanonical writings, it is critical to study the pseudepigraphal writings. As a result, the third chapter will focus on identifying and researching passages that make reference to clean or unclean animals. There are several significant references in this category (of pseudepigraphal writings), and the

book that provides the most clues is the Epistle of Barnabas. It is necessary to establish a connection between allegorical theory and the Alexandrian School, as this theory is prominent in Chapter 10 of the Epistle. According to this theory, clean animals are virtues, while unclean animals are vices, and the author of the book suggests that Moses wrote Leviticus 11 with this intention in mind. To further elucidate this concept, we will examine Chapter 10 to ensure that there are no interpolations. Along with the Epistle of Barnabas, there are two other pseudepigraphal writings: the Essene Gospel of Peace and the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs. These writings take a more radical stance against the consumption of unclean animals, and even advocate for a vegetarian diet. We will, however, examine the interpretational concepts and their confrontation with the literal reality of Leviticus 11.

The fourth chapter evaluates the Church Fathers' teachings on Leviticus 11's dietary laws. It is critical to consider the Church Fathers' position on the dietary laws and what they have to say/affirm about the proper attitude toward clean or unclean animals. They not only cite significant passages from Leviticus 11, but also lend support to some of the other apocryphal writings. Their disclosure will provide some insight into possible interpolations in apocryphal writings. The Church Fathers' statements will be compared to other passages that discuss the same animals to determine any similarities or differences.

Key-terms

Dietary laws

Church Fathers

Clean / unclean animals

Non-canonical writings

Leviticus 11

CHAPTER 2

INCURSION IN LEVITICUS 11

Given the specific appearance of clean and unclean creatures in Leviticus 11, we believe it is necessary to provide an overview of the chapter, its descriptions, and the animals mentioned. The dietary laws are supported by Leviticus, but there are also mentioned in Deut 14 as a repetition and completion.

The mentioned species are clean according to Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14: “the ox, the sheep, the goat, the deer, the gazelle, the roe deer, the wild goat, the mountain goat, the antelope, and the mountain sheep;”⁴ marine creatures with fins and scales;⁵ and “any kind of locust, katydid, cricket, or grasshopper.”⁶

The following species are considered unclean: the hyrax (or rock hyrax), the rabbit, the pig,⁷ the camel, and the hare,⁸ “the eagle, the vulture, the black vulture, the red kite, any kind of black kite, any kind of raven, the horned owl, the screech owl, the gull, any kind of hawk, the little owl, the cormorant, the great owl, the white

⁴ Deut 14:4-5.

⁵ Lev 11:9.

⁶ Acc Lev 11:21-22.

⁷ Of all the animals prohibited by the law, the pig is considered the most unclean. Lev 11:7 and Deut 14:8.

⁸ Lev 11:4-6 and Deut 14:7.

owl, the desert owl, the osprey, the stork, any kind of heron, the hoopoe and the bat;”⁹
“the weasel, the rat, any kind of great lizard, the gecko, the monitor lizard, the wall
lizard, the skink and the chameleon.”¹⁰

Leviticus 11 is part of the second section of the book and deals with cleansings
— we will focus exclusively on chapter 11, which deals with animal cleansing.
Chapter 11 is further divided into six pericopes: 1) Clean/unclean animals (Lev 11:1-
8); 2) Clean/unclean fish (Lev 11:9-12); 3) Clean/unclean birds (Lev 11:13-19); 4)
Clean/unclean flying insects (Lev 11:20-31); 5) The principle of contamination (Lev
11:32-42) and 6) Exhortation to listen (Lev 11:43-47).

God’s prohibition does not refer to the fact that animals are unclean in and of
themselves – by creation – but to the fact that they are called unclean, and the
contamination has a special connection with man’s spiritual side – without addressing
the medical aspect of those who consume the animals forbidden by God, as we will do
later. Why is there a ban against ingesting in the Bible? There are a number of
hypotheses that we will mention below that may provide us with an answer.

1. The dietary laws of Leviticus 11 are medical in nature. By interpreting this
idea, we can deduce that God restricts the Israelites from consuming
specific animals due to Palestine’s climatic characteristics. There is no
doubt that the animals whose meat has been outlawed are unhealthy,
especially given Palestine’s warm climate.¹¹ Many of the poisonous

⁹ Lev 11:13-19 and Deut 14:12-18. It is believed that this list of birds containing only 20
refers to those that the Jews knew.

¹⁰ Lev 11:29-30.

¹¹ Acc Robert Jamieson, Andrew Robert Fausset, David Brown, *Commentary critical and
explanatory on the whole Bible* (New York: Richard R. Smith, 1930), 200.

elements of dangerous plants consumed by animals were removed via the salivary glands – in sheep, goats, and cattle. These animals’ meat is more easily digested and assimilated. Non-ruminant animal flesh is less nutritious and can result in scurvy and scrofulosis.¹² Furthermore, Matthew Henry¹³ asserts that God, as a wise and caring Father, prevents His children from consuming meat that could make them ill. If the Jews disobeyed this commandment, they would also jeopardize their physical health. According to the World Health Organization health is defined as “a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, not only the absence of disease or disability”¹⁴ in 1948. As did the Jews, who recognized that health involves mental, physical, social, and spiritual dimensions, but that all of these dimensions may be attained via an unbroken connection with God. Thus, health is also connected to man’s spirituality (Luke 8:48). With all of the above, we lack sufficient scientific evidence to support the first theory that the dietary laws refers to medical issues.

2. The dietary laws establish a link between the animal and the rituals.

According to this hypothesis, God forbids the Israelites from consuming certain animals because: a) they were used in idolatrous ceremonies and rituals by the surrounding peoples; and b) diseases were regarded as divine

¹² *Ibid.*, 201.

¹³ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible*, vol. 1, *Genesis to Deuteronomy* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, [2009]), 712.

¹⁴ World Health Organisation, *The Constitution*, retrieved from <https://www.who.int/about/governance/constitution>.

work – a punishment.¹⁵ When a person was unable to determine the cause of a particular condition solely through “examination of the symptoms, their explanation was that supernatural power was at work.”¹⁶ On the one hand, according to Jacob Milgrom,¹⁷ diseases were viewed in the Near East as a divine work, a punishment. On the other hand, Matthew Henry argues that many of God’s forbidden animals were worshiped by pagans — either as deities or as offerings to the deities.¹⁸ For example, the pig represented Demeter/Ceres; the swan represented Aphrodite/Venus; the owl represented Athena/Minerva; the eagle represented Zeus/Jupiter; and the eagle, dog, and snake represented Ares/Mars.¹⁹ By command, God attempts to distinguish the Jews from all other pagan peoples (as demonstrated in Exod 8:26, where the animals permitted for sacrifice by God were not permitted to the Egyptians), but we find parallels between certain animals considered clean by Leviticus 11 and the animals sacrificed to pagans or as symbols – for example, the cow was a symbol for Hera/Juno; the goat was a symbol for Dionysus/Bacchus; and so on.

3. The dietary laws as a key test of demonstrating obedience to God – a pedagogical dimension. This hypothesis is supported by Adam’s

¹⁵ According to this point, Jews who were faithful but still fell ill were seen by the pagans as punished by God.

¹⁶ Jomo Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya* (African Writers series; Nairobi: Kenway Publications, 2015), 155.

¹⁷ Add Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, (Vol. 1; Series: Leviticus: a new translation with introduction and commentary; New York: Doubleday, 1991), 820.

¹⁸ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible*, 711.

¹⁹ Acc George Lăzărescu, *Dicționar de mitologie* (București: Casa editorială Odeon, 1992), 206, 261.

obedience test. After Adam sinned, he was forbidden to eat the fruits of the tree of life, not because they contained something poisonous, but because it violated the divine commandment. As a result of this discovery, the diet prohibition focuses not only on medical considerations, but also on man's disposition to obey God's commandments. Thus, through obedience to God, the exercise of reason – one of man's distinctions from animals – and judgment enables us to live beautifully/healthily. According to John Gill, the law of food was given to affirm God as Creator; to teach the people what it means to respect God's will; to establish boundaries around lusts and teach them self-denial.²⁰ God is concerned with our entire being and desires that we live our lives in accordance with divine prescriptions, even if we do not understand or see the significance of some of them at the moment. By adhering to the dietary law, man reminded himself that he was sanctifying himself by not succumbing to the temptation to consume the forbidden animals. This awareness of sanctification provided the Israelites with the ability to uphold the moral law—a concept found in the Essene Gospel of Peace. Thus, the Israelites could remain obedient even while eating. Additionally, this pedagogical dimension is connected to ethical implications.²¹

4. Dietary law is associated with encouraging the Israelites to remain in the promised land and not scatter among the Gentiles. According to

²⁰ Acc John Gill, *An exposition of the Old Testament*, vol. 3, *Leviticus* (London: William Hill, 1852), 119.

²¹ For a detailed explanation, see, Walter Houston, *Purity and Monotheism: Clean and Unclean Animals in Biblical Law* (Supplement Series 140, Sheffield: JSOT, 1993), 253-258.

commentators such as Robert Jamieson, Andrew Robert Fausset, and David Brown, one of the most compelling reasons for the dietary law's establishment was to prevent the Israelites from interfering with other peoples' practices.²² Thus, the Jews despised a large number of the surrounding peoples' eating practices. During the period when Israel's religious practices deteriorated and they were exiled, the distinction of food enabled them to avoid interfering with the gentiles among whom they were dispersed. The distinction was made not only in terms of food, but also in terms of worship. In Daniel chapter one, we see a similar problem: Daniel is in Babylon and is having difficulty making meal choices. Daniel, of course, did not leave Israel willingly, but he serves as an instructive example. By emphasizing food distinctions, Jews can become aware of their uniqueness and mission as holy people. Indeed, the Jews distinguished themselves from all other peoples through the dietary laws and the observance of Sabbath.

According to Mary Douglas, the emphasis on rumination implies that because all terrestrial carnivorous animals do not chew their food, they are automatically prohibited by law.²³ Even so, man initially abstained from meat consumption prior to the flood (despite the fact that he knew which animals were clean and which were not – see Gen 7:2), but was permitted to consume meat following the flood, but never

²² Acc Robert Jamieson, Andrew Robert Fausset, David Brown, *Commentary critical and explanatory on the whole Bible*, 201.

²³ Mary Douglas, "The Forbidden Animals in Leviticus," in *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* (Vol. 19; No. 59; 1993), 3-23.

blood or animal fat. Carnivorous animals feed on blood, and man is forbidden to do so (Gen 9:4) – another argument against the consumption of unclean animals.

In Leviticus 11, God gave the law to Moses and Aaron so they could pass it on to the people. Moses was the civil class’s leader, while Aaron was the ecclesiastical class’s leader. In this way, God empowers them to inform the populace about proper diet practices.

In both Leviticus and Deuteronomy, there is no mention of clean birds. This omission of specifics indicates that the Israelites were either aware of which birds are clean or that all birds not included in the list are clean.²⁴ Several times in the description of unclean animals, the Hebrew terms for “unclean” are mentioned. The chart below illustrates the terms used in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14 to refer to sin.²⁵

Creatures	Leviticus 11	Deuteronomy 14
Quadrupeds	3-8 טָמֵא - Unclean	3-8 טָמֵא - Unclean
Marine creatures	10-12 יָקֵץ - An abomination	9-10 טָמֵא - Unclean
Birds	13-19 יָקֵץ - An abomination	11-18 -
Insects	20-23 יָקֵץ - An abomination	19 טָמֵא - Unclean
Creeping	41-43 יָקֵץ - An abomination	-
All (in general)	46-47 טָמֵא - Unclean	3 וְזָבָחָהּ - An abomination

²⁴ Acc Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge, 1966), 69.

²⁵ Add Johnson M. Kimuhu, *Leviticus* (Studies in biblical literature; vol. 115; New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2008), 337.

The texts concerning unclean creatures agree on the order in which these creatures appear:

Creatures	Leviticus 11	Deuteronomy 14
Earth	טָמֵא	טָמֵא
Sea	שָׂרָץ	טָמֵא
Birds	שָׂרָץ	-
Insects	שָׂרָץ	טָמֵא
Creeping	שָׂרָץ	-

It is worth noting that, while the interchangeability of these terms for ritual impurity is accepted, the interpretation remains suspect. For example, Walter Houston argues that these terms have distinct connotations in the context of Leviticus 11, but not only. He maintains that the noun *שָׂרָץ* it is only used in reference to prohibited meat. The root *שָׂרַץ* implies disgust or aversion toward those types of unclean animals and indicates a commitment to strict avoidance, but has no ritual technical connotation.²⁶ Even so, the law remains valid even if the ritual/ritual component is omitted, because the dietary laws entail both the attitude of abstaining from unclean creatures and their consumption.

²⁶ Add Walter Houston, *Purity and Monotheism: Clean and Unclean Animals in Biblical Law*, 41-2.

CHAPTER 3

THE DIETARY LAWS IN DEUTEROCANONICAL WRITINGS

The term deuterocanonical was created in the sixteenth century by the Catholic Church to refer to OT books that are not proto-canonical - that is, they are not included in the MT canon. The deuterocanonical books were partially accepted in the early Christian environment because they were included in the Septuagint (LXX), the Greek edition of the OT used by the apostles for Gentile evangelization. Over half of the OT quotations in the NT are from the LXX. The Apostles, on the other hand, did not command converts to abstain from certain books in the LXX. That said, the Maccabees' books, none of which are included in the MT canon, were known to and influential among the Christian medium. The Maccabees' writings, specifically 1, 2, and 4 Maccabees, contain numerous references to the pig, an animal considered unclean by the OT.

The Maccabees consist of five books. The first two books were translated from Greek into early Latin, followed by the Vulgate and English versions. Were accepted as canonical at the Council of Trent, but are not included in the MT canon. Two additional Maccabees books have been discovered in various LXX manuscripts. The Maccabees' fifth book is only found in Arabic, as an ancient writing. The numbers assigned to the Maccabees Books do not always correspond to their chronological order and are not necessarily chronological. If historical order were to be followed, the third book of the Maccabees (3 Maccabees) should have been the

first, the fourth book an “addition to the second book of the Maccabees (2 Maccabees)”²⁷ – which retains its number – and the first book 3 Maccabees.²⁸

The Maccabee Books are named after Mattathias, the Patriarch of the Hasmonean Dynasty who led the Jewish revolt against the Greco-Syrian Empire. In Hebrew, the name Maccabee means “hammer” – this is the most widely accepted variant of the name.²⁹

1 Maccabees

The Maccabees’ first book (1 Maccabees) is a significant apocryphal / deuterocanonical work. It chronicles the Jews’ bloody and protracted struggle for religious integrity and national liberation in narrative form.

The book is written in a Jewish style, and it is possible that it was written in Hebrew by somebody from Palestine. The reason for this discovery is that it contains a large number of Hebrew words – despite the fact that the text was later translated into Greek, it retains a large number of Hebrew words. Although the precise date of composition of this book is unknown, it is believed to have occurred “during the reign of high priest John Hyrcanus (135-106 BC).”³⁰

In 1 Macc 1:47-49, 63 we have the following account:

²⁷ Gabriela Signori, *Dying for the Faith, Killing for the Faith* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 4.

²⁸ Acc E. P. Barrows, “Appendix. The Apocryphal Books of the Old Testament,” accessed March 10, 2022, https://biblehub.com/library/barrows/companion_to_the_bible/appendix_the_apocryphal_books_of.htm.

²⁹ Acc Mitchell G. Bard, *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Middle East Conflict* (New York: Alpha Books, 2008), 216-18.

³⁰ E. P. Barrows, “Appendix. The Apocryphal Books of the Old Testament,” accessed March 10, 2022, https://biblehub.com/library/barrows/companion_to_the_bible/appendix_the_apocryphal_books_of.htm.

Set up altars, and groves, and chapels of idols, and sacrifice swine's flesh,³¹ and unclean beasts: that they should also leave their children uncircumcised, and make their souls abominable with all manner of uncleanness and profanation: to the end they might forget the law, and change all the ordinances. . . . Wherefore they chose rather to die, that they might not be defiled with meats, and that they might not profane the holy covenant: so then they died.³²

To begin, we'll consider the context of the text rendered above. Antiochus III defeated Ptolemy in around 198 BC, and Israel fell under his rule.³³ Antiochus Epiphanes attempted to impose Hellenistic practices and to abolish Jewish customs and laws during his reign over Israel. They insisted on the invocation of Greek, pagan gods prior to the start of each race following the construction of a track. A few years later, theaters were constructed, and even a statue of Zeus was erected at the Temple, for which Antiochus IV sacrificed a pig.³⁴ Additionally, attempts were made to repeal the Israelite law prohibiting circumcision.

While it is widely accepted that not all Jews opposed the changes initiated during Antiochus III and IV's reigns, we will focus on the account in 1 Maccabees 1. Despite the fact that some members of the people of Israel succumbed to Antiochus IV Epiphanes' oppression, there were also those who refused to yield and would rather die than violate Jewish laws—whether they concerned circumcision or dietary laws.

³¹ The Greek word *χοῖρος* means pig, the term sometimes used to refer to female genitals. The word *χοιροψάλας*, derived from *χοῖρος*, is an epithet given to the god Dionysus and is a reference to his role as a fertility deity in ancient Greece. Also, the pig was a highly regarded offering in Greek and Roman culture. Unlike the Greeks and the Romans, the Jews were forbidden to have pork, even though it had been used by primitive Palestinian populations. One can recognize an implicit reference to the prophecies of Jeremiah 7:1-15 and Ezekiel 8:7-16.

³² Cristian Badilita, *et al*, *Septuaginta* (Vol. III; București: Polirom, 2005).

³³ Acc Judith R Baskin; Kenneth Seeskin, *The Cambridge guide to Jewish history, religion, and culture* (Series Comprehensive surveys of religion; Cambridge: University Press, 2010), 34-57.

³⁴ Or Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

According to history, Antiochus issued a religious decree, but its authenticity is debatable.³⁵ Anyone who practiced Judaism — or circumcision and the dietary laws — was subject to death under this decree. This discrepancy between the king’s desire and the people of Israel’s practice is mentioned in 3 Macc 3:7, 8: “Instead, they talked incessantly about how different they were in regard to worship and food, asserting that they did not fulfill their contracted obligations either to the king or the armed forces but were hostile and very unsympathetic to his interests. So, it was no small charge they fastened on them.”³⁶

If we examine all the peoples who were subject to Seleucid rule, we will discover that no such decree prohibiting religion was ever imposed on any citizens. This decree sought to forcefully integrate and homogenize the Jews within the Seleucid Empire. Due to the lack of parallels in another people’s rights, Steven Weitzman advanced several arguments against the edict’s historicity,³⁷ arguing that it was invented by Hasmonean supporters to justify their actions toward other Jews considered unclean.

If Weitzman is correct, the historical event of martyrdom can be questioned, as martyrdom entails persecution.

In this context, we can conclude that Eleazar and the seven brothers’ martyrdom (which we will study in 2 Maccabees 6 and 7) is purely narrative, but we are not in a hurry to draw conclusions, at least for the time being. However, this does

³⁵ Acc Richard Faber, Renate Schlesier, *Die Restauration der Götter: Antike Religion und Neo-Paganismus* (Würzburg: Königshausen, 1986), 45–60.

³⁶ James H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (Vol. 2; New York: Doubleday & Company, 1985), 520-21.

³⁷ Steven Weitzman, “Plotting Antiochus’s Persecution,” in *Journal of Biblical Literature* (Vol. 123; no. 2; Cambridge, 2004), 219-34.

not preclude it from being based on historical accounts. Persecution, martyrdom, and religious violence are all present, even if their impetus did not originate with the Seleucids, but with the Jews who collaborate with them.³⁸

According to 1 Maccabees, there are two schools of thought in Jewish monotheism: universalism and exclusivism. Universalism is represented by the reform-oriented party, while exclusivism is represented by Jewish believers who bear anything but refuse to consume unclean flesh or accept homogenization with pagan peoples. On the one hand, the OT asserts that God is the God of the entire world, of all peoples.³⁹ On the other hand, a distinction is made between God's chosen people and the rest of the world, and anyone desiring to join the chosen people must adhere to the "strict observance of the Jewish way of life"⁴⁰ as prescribed by Mosaic law.

From Antiochus Epiphanes' point of view and the Jews who wanted a reformation in Israel, the dedication of the Temple at Jerusalem to Zeus did not mean consecrating him to another god, but recognizing another name for YHWH.⁴¹ Looking through the eyes of universalism it might seem absurd to fight against dominion and remain faithful to Levitical laws as long as some Jews have already given up on these laws.

³⁸ Elias Bickermann saw the reformist faction of the Jews as an impetus for persecution: ". . . the persecution was initiated by the local authorities." Bickermann also considered the edict of Antiochus Epiphanes to be historically authentic, claiming that it was issued at the urging of the Hellenists. For a more detailed explanation, see Elias Bickerman, *The God of the Maccabees* (Vol. 32; Leiden: Brill, 1979), 92-4.

³⁹ Acc Isaiah 44:24-45:8

⁴⁰ David A. DeSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship, and Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 125-6.

⁴¹ Acc Elias Bickermann, *The God of the Maccabees*, 92-6.

When someone takes an oath, he or she swears to their local gods, who frequently shared similar status in the time of the OT.⁴² The fact that a stranger worships gods other than the indigenous ones does not create grounds for hostility, but rather fosters understanding – at least in paganism.⁴³ Being Jewish entailed being upright, abiding by the laws – circumcision and diet – and worshipping only YHWH.

Those who accepted universalism — and who did not face persecution or martyrdom — abandoned the laws and became pagans. Religion was a way of life in this context, not a cult or a belief system.

What was previously considered religious practice in the context of 1 Maccabees has become a matter of life and death. Interestingly, in the contemporary context, an attempt has been made to repeal the law, thus setting a precedent in Jewish history. Even though the fact was isolated, some Jews suffered as a result of the universalists' inconsistency.

2 Maccabees

According to the writings we have thus far, the majority of the Maccabees' writings are believed to be in Hebrew. They were, however, written in Greek around 100-200 AD. The first Hebrew translation of Maccabean texts “appears in a manuscript dating from the second half of the thirteenth century,”⁴⁴ while the second

⁴² Acc Carl Schmitt, *Der Begriff des Politischen* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1991), 223.

⁴³ See also, Sanford Budick, Wolfgang Iser, *Translatability of Cultures: Figurations of the Space Between* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 25–36.

⁴⁴ Jacqueline Hamesse, Marta Fattori, *Traduction et traducteurs de l'Antiquité tardive au XIVe siècle* (Vol. 11; Turnhout: Brepols, 1990), 326.

appears in a fifteenth-century manuscript.⁴⁵ In both cases, Jewish translators assert that the texts were derived from Christian manuscripts.

The Second Book of Maccabees (2 Maccabees) was written between 150 and 120 BC,⁴⁶ but according to Stephen L. Harris, a more precise date is 124 BC.⁴⁷

2 Maccabees begins with an invitation from Palestinian Jews to Egyptian Jews to participate in the feast of Temple purification following Antiochus IV's desecration. From a religious standpoint, 2 Maccabees is quite interesting because it contains an account of a mother and her seven children being martyred for refusing to consume unclean meat — meat derived from animals that are prohibited under Levitical law. The passage I'm referring to is 2 Macc 7:1-9, and it reads as follows:

It happened also that seven brothers and their mother were arrested and were being compelled by the king, under torture with whips and cords, to partake of unlawful swine's flesh. One of them, acting as their spokesman, said, "What do you intend to ask and learn from us? For we are ready to die rather than transgress the laws of our fathers." The king fell into a rage, and gave orders that pans and caldrons be heated. These were heated immediately, and he commanded that the tongue of their spokesman be cut out and that they scalp him and cut off his hands and feet, while the rest of the brothers and the mother looked on. When he was utterly helpless, the king[a] ordered them to take him to the fire, still breathing, and to fry him in a pan. The smoke from the pan spread widely, but the brothers[b] and their mother encouraged one another to die nobly, saying, "The Lord God is watching over us and in truth has compassion on us, as Moses declared in his song which bore witness against the people to their faces, when he said, 'And he will have compassion on his servants.'" After the first brother had died in this way, they brought forward the second for their sport. They tore off the skin of his head with the hair, and asked him, "Will you eat rather than have your body punished limb by limb?" He replied in the language of his fathers, and said to them, "No." Therefore he in turn underwent tortures as the first brother had done. And when he was at his last breath, he said, "You accursed wretch, you

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 585.

⁴⁶ Lorent T. Stuchenbruck, Daniel M. Gurtner, *T&T Clark Encyclopedia of Second Temple* (vol. 1; London: T&T Clark, 2019), 268.

⁴⁷ Stephen L. Harris, *Understanding the Bible* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2011), 270.

dismiss us from this present life, but the King of the universe will raise us up to an everlasting renewal of life, because we have died for his laws.⁴⁸

1 Maccabees is devoted to the struggle of the Jews against the “pagans.”

According to Hermann Lichtenberger’s succinct conclusion, 1 Maccabees was written in the Old Testament’s historical style, but the second book’s rhetoric is Greek⁴⁹ in origin, involving an epistolary invitation from the Judean Jewish community to the co-religious in Egypt to celebrate the Temple’s rededication⁵⁰ - Hanukkah - 2 Macc 1:1-8.

In 2 Maccabees, the struggle is no longer restricted to pagans, but also to Jews who have succumbed to Greek influences (see 2 Maccabees 4), as Elias Bickermann demonstrates in his book on the Jewish revolt.⁵¹ Thus, 2 Maccabees adds to historical accounts the struggle against separatists and pagans that culminated in Eleazar’s martyrdom (2 Maccabees 6) and the seven brothers’ martyrdom (2 Maccabees 7).

According to 2 Maccabees, the only things worth dying for are faith and the law.⁵² We will not dwell on Eleazar’s martyrdom, as it is discussed in greater detail in the Maccabees’ fourth book. The story of Eleazar and his seven brothers being martyred is told in rabbinic teachings.⁵³ By contrast, the martyrs of the faith of 1 and

⁴⁸ 2 Maccabees retrieved from

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Maccabees%207&version=RSV>.

⁴⁹ Hermann Lichtenberger, “History-writing and History-telling in First and Second Maccabees,” in *Memory in the Bible and Antiquity. The Fifth Durham-Tübingen Research Symposium*, (ed. Stephen C. Barton; vol. 212; Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 95–110.

⁵⁰ Acc Gabriela Signori, *Dying for the Faith, Killing for the Faith*, 4.

⁵¹ Elias Bickerman, *The God of the Maccabees. Studies on the Meaning and Origin of the Maccabean Revolt* (Vol. 32; Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity; Leiden: Brill, 1979), 97.

⁵² For a breakdown in this sense, see 2 Macc 4:1; 5:8–9, 15; 7:2, 8, 21, 27; 8:21; 13:3, 11, 14; 14:18 and 15:29.

⁵³ Acc Robert Doran, “The Martyr: A Synoptic View of the Mother and her Seven Sons,” in *Ideal Figures in Ancient Judaism. Profiles and Paradigms* (ed. John Collins. George W.E.

2 Maccabees left few traces in the rabbinic literature of the first millennium BC to the first millennium AD, which was later discussed and written.⁵⁴

Consider the event of the seven brothers' martyrdom. To begin, the number of martyred sons need not be precise. If we accept the account of 2 Maccabees 7 as historical fact, we can correctly assert that the number is literal; however, if we accept the account as a model worth following — as does 4 Maccabees — we can assert that the number of sons is symbolic. As none of these assumptions are relevant to our study, we make no comment on them. Second, as mentioned in verse 5, burning in the fire is also mentioned in the Bible in Lev 21:9; Dan 3:6; and Jer 29:22, indicating that the account is plausible and realistic. Thirdly, we cannot assert that each son suffered the same torments as their father. The reality is that they all died, and they died as a result of their refusal to succumb to the urge to eat pork. Fourth, there is a striking distinction between the first account, that of Eleazar, and the second, that of the seven brothers. In the first account, the meat offered to Eleazar was unclean, but it had been sacrificed—by sacrificing it, a greater weight is attached to Eleazar's transgression of the Mosaic commandment than if he had yielded and eaten it. In contrast, the meat in the second account, the one into which the seven sons enter, had not been slaughtered, but was simply unclean.

The account of these two situations demonstrates that regardless of the size of the trial, you must resist it to the death, if necessary, in order to remain faithful to God and His commandments. Fifthly, we want to draw attention to another point. If the

Nickelsburg; Vol. 12; Society of Biblical Literature; Septuagint and Cognate Studies; Chico: Scholars Press, 1980), 189–205.

⁵⁴ Gunter Stemberger, "The Maccabees in Rabbinic Tradition," in *The Scriptures and the Rolls. Studies in Honour of A.S. van der Woude on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday* (ed. Garcia Martinez; Vol. 49; Supplements Vetus Testamentum; Leidene: Brill, 1992), 193–203.

king forces Eleazar to eat in Chapter 6, and he touches the pork, in Chapter 7, the seven sons not only refuse to eat, but even touch the pork.

Among the most remarkable examples found in the deuterocanonical writings is the story of the heroine mother who was tortured and executed after witnessing the martyrdom of her seven sons because they refuse to abandon the Mosaic law and eating pork. As far as we can tell, this account appears to fulfill Jer 15:9, which states, “He who gave birth to seven sons longs, gives up his soul; her sun sets when it is still daytime: it is red, covered in shame. Those who remain give prey to the sword before their enemies.” However, we will examine the account in 2 Maccabees without attempting to establish a connection to Jeremiah’s account.

The NT contains a case described in Heb 11:35⁵⁵ in which the episode of 2 Maccabees 7 can be related, and this is considered because no other part of the OT contains a similar account. At the same time Hebrews may have referred to this deuterocanonical writing or recalled the difficult days of the people of Israel under Seleucid rule in order to encourage believers who were experiencing difficulties.

The Maccabees’ books are central to the history of religious warfare⁵⁶ — this is a long-standing historical consensus.⁵⁷ As the text indicates, salvation is the

⁵⁵ Images of persecution and imprisonment multiply in the following verses of Hebrews to convince the early readers of the church that their experience was one with that of believers of previous generations. In this sense, one can see a comparison between Hebrews 10:32-34 and 11:36-38.

⁵⁶ To that end, see Gerard Rouwhorst, “The Cult of the Seven Maccabean Brothers and their Mother in Christian Tradition,” in *Saints and Role Models in Judaism and Christianity* (ed. Marcel Poorthuis. Joshua Schwartz; Vol. 7; Jewish and Christian Perspectives Series; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 185-204.

⁵⁷ Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *Die zwei Körper des Königs. The King's Two Bodies. Eine Studie zur politischen Theologie des Mittelalters* (Munich: Dtv, 1990), 241–78.

promised reward for those willing to die for their faith, but here the preparation is through martyrdom rather than death in “rebellion.”

In 2 Maccabees to die for the faith – that is, to die martyred – and to kill for the faith are placed side by side, forming a contrast between those who keep their faith and those who adhere to another religious conception. In the history of the Maccabees, martyrdom and religious warfare never made a common front, but had separate paths.

The martyrdom of the mother with the seven sons, who preferred martyrdom to abandoning their faith, were compared by early Christians to Christian martyrs. Origen and Eusebius of Caesarea both used the martyrdom of the seven sons as a model for recounting the 177 AD massacre in Lyon that resulted in the martyrdom of 48 Christians.⁵⁸

Following Eleazar’s death, which serves as a parable for youth, comes the illustration of the seven young men, which appears to be an useful addition and follow-up to Eleazar’s example. In this way, 2 Maccabees encompasses age and gender categories;⁵⁹ what matters is that you do not deny God’s laws and the faith, as doing so will result in eternal damnation.

⁵⁸ Acc Martha Vinson, “Gregory Nazianzen’s Homily 15 and the Genesis of the Christian Cult of the Maccabean Martyrs,” *Byzantion* (Vol. 64; 1994), 173–4.

⁵⁹ These indications lead us to the biblical reference Deuteronomy 32:25 where it says, “The sword shall destroy outside; There shall be terror within for the young man and virgin, the nursing child with the man of gray hairs.”

4 Maccabees

According to Heinrich Dörrie,⁶⁰ the Fourth Book of Maccabees (4 Maccabees) was primarily transmitted through collections of legends. Dörrie determined that there were over ninety copies, a sizable number. The manuscript's majority of copies date from the XII and XIII centuries AD.

As I mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, 4 Maccabees is a sequel to 2 Maccabees, but it is also the result of a beautification of book 2 Maccabees, specifically chapters 6 and 7, and the author's primary goal is to promote religious loyalty.⁶¹ The majority of writers place the publication of this book between the years 20 and 130 AD.⁶²

The first three chapters of the text are a diatribe in which the author asserts his thesis, namely the supremacy of reason over passions, while the remainder of the book is narrative – about Eleazar's martyrdom and his mother with his seven sons.

We will focus on 4 Macc 5:1-7:

And so the tyrant Antiochus took his seat with his counselors on a certain high place, with his fully armed troops mustered around him, and he ordered his guards to drag along every single one of the Hebrews and compel them to eat swine's flesh and food sacrificed to idols. Whoever refused to eat the defiled food was to be tortured and put to death. Many were violently snatched away and the first of the herd to be brought before Antiochus was a man called Eleazar, of priestly stock, expert in the Law and advanced in age, and known to many of the tyrant's entourage for his philosophy. When Antiochus saw him, he said, "Before I have the tortures begun on you, old man, I would advise you to eat of the swine's flesh and save yourself."⁶³

⁶⁰ Heinrich Dörrie, *Passio ss. Machabaeorum. Die antike lateinische Übersetzung des IV. Makkabäer buches* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1938), 7.

⁶¹ Acc Moses Hadas, *The Third and Fourth Book of Maccabees* (Jewish Apocryphal Literature Series; New York: Ktav, 1976), 94.

⁶² John R Bartlett, "The Books of the Maccabees," in *The Oxford Companion of the Bible* (Oxford: University Press, 1993), 482.

⁶³ James H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 549.

And 4 Macc 6:12-20:

Thereupon, partly out of pity for his old age, partly in sympathy through previous friendship, partly in admiration of his courage, some of the king's courtiers went up to him and said, "Why, Eleazar, are you so unreasonably destroying yourself in this foul way? Let us bring you some of the cooked food, and you pretend to taste of the swine's flesh and save yourself." But as if their counsel only made his wounds all the harder to bear, Eleazar cried aloud, "Never may the children of Abraham think such evil thoughts as is out of cowardice to enact a part so ill-becoming to us. It would most surely be contrary to reason if, having lived our lives in accordance with the truth right up to our old age and having preserved our fair reputation for so living in conformity with the Law, we should now change and ourselves become a model of impiety to the young by setting them an example of eating unclean food."⁶⁴

The phrase "to defile himself by eating" is used nine times in these passages to emphasize king Antiochus' intention. Additionally, the speech of Antiochus IV Epiphanes is omitted from 2 Maccabees, as is Eleazar's response – the reason for this, as I mentioned previously, is that we are dealing with textual embellishment. This is where rhetorical amplification comes into play.

In 2 Maccabees, the king witnesses only Eleazar's martyrdom; in 4 Maccabees, he also witnesses the mother's martyrdom with her seven sons. When the concept of unclean meat is invoked a clarification regarding the pig is desired. It is unclean according to Mosaic law, and any Jew is familiar with the food laws. According to this argument – that the pig is unclean – we can understand why the Maccabees' books were distributed to non-Jews rather than Jews, as all Jews were aware that the pig was an unclean animal.

Eleazar's argument for refusing to eat that meat is essentially identical to that found in 2 Macc 6:23-25, 27-28. To begin, Eleazar does not accept the role of a coward by refusing to eat pork. Even if the cooked dishes were not necessarily pork, he could not fathom escaping torture on this pretense. Second, the text arranges the

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 550.

characters so that Eleazar is tested first, which can be because he was “old in age.” The first reason is that wisdom comes with age. Another reason is that an elderly person commands respect and possesses a far greater capacity for example than a young person. Thirdly, as a result of the emperor’s request to consume pork, Eleazar is thrust into a position of great responsibility, as all the other young men were watching to see what he would do as the first called. Most likely, if he had succumbed and consumed pork, others would have followed suit. Eleazar serves as a forerunner to those around him and serves as an example, a parable.

Antiochus Epiphanes’ first charge against the Jews was that their religion was not subject to natural laws, such as those found in Greek philosophy and stoicism, and that refusing to accept the gifts of a generous nature was irrational and unjust. Pork was an innocent pleasure in this context, and pigs are a natural gift. The second objection or conception is that divinity supervises and is involved in human actions – a concept that existed not only in Greek philosophy, but also in Jewish philosophy. The notion that violating God’s law under duress does not result in divine punishment is repeated in chapter 8, but Eleazar’s response dashes Antiochus’ hopes: “no compulsion is greater than obedience to our law” (4 Macc 5:16).

Eleazar will not jeopardize all of his reputation built over a lifetime in the name of extending his earthly life. He affirms and defends the Law’s supremacy and necessity. For Eleazar, living meant adhering to God’s commandments, and breaking them automatically resulted in his death, despite his physical existence.⁶⁵ In his case – a man renowned for his virtue – the death of a martyr served only to preserve virtue.

⁶⁵ Acc David A. DeSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship, and Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture*, 125-6.

Finally, he fulfills his obligation to set a good example for those who witnessed the scene and does not even concede to his claims to dominant Greek culture. It made no difference whether he ate or pretended to eat, because the outcome was the same for the audience. His example of obedience to divine laws is followed by the mother with her seven sons, resulting in the defeat of Antiochus' plan to coerce the Jews into renouncing the laws received.

When we examine the text in relation to Eleazar, we see the following:⁶⁶

- a) Eleazar willingly offered himself to die rather than disobeying God's law (4 Macc 6:27);
- b) Eleazar demands that the punishment meted out to martyrs be considered sufficient for the entire Jewish nation, he is a *ἀντίστος*;⁶⁷
- c) He demands that his sacrifice be sufficient for the other believers in the nation.
- d) As a result, "God's attitude toward the nation should change"⁶⁸ (4 Macc 6:28).

Moses Hadas interprets Eleazar's appearance "as a scenario in which the public disobedience of God's law is discussed."⁶⁹ According to Lev 20:22–26, distinguishing between clean and unclean food reflected and "perpetuated God's distinction between the chosen people and other nations."⁷⁰ The prohibition against worshiping other gods was well understood in Mosaic law, but it was not as clear

⁶⁶ Add David A. DeSilva, *4 Maccabees: introduction and commentary on the Greek text in Codex Sinaiticus* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 147.

⁶⁷ *ἀντίστος* is found in 4 Macc 6:29 and 17:21 and means someone who gives his life as a reward for someone else.

⁶⁸ David A. DeSilva, *4 Maccabees: introduction and commentary on the Greek text in Codex Sinaiticus*, 147.

⁶⁹ Moses Hadas, *The Third and Fourth Book of Maccabees*, 167-69.

⁷⁰ David A. DeSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship, and Purity*, 260-62.

about eating the flesh sacrificed to them. Eleazar embodies the life of a devout Jew in this way.

As Jiří Moskala writes, “4 Maccabees presents the rationale of unclean food mainly as self-control and as moral value. . . . It is interesting that these interpretations have no allegorical tendencies.”⁷¹

⁷¹ Jiří Moskala, “The Laws of Clean and Unclean Animals of Leviticus 11: their Nature, Theology, and Rationale (an Intertextual Study)” (Dissertations, 98; 1998), 27. <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/dissertations/98>

CHAPTER 4

THE DIETARY LAWS IN PSEUDEPIGRAPHAL WRITINGS

Pseudepigraphal books are also known as apocryphal books due to their rejection by the biblical canon. Pseudepigrapha is a term that refers to a work to which a false authority is ascribed by claiming the author is a saint or other significant figure from the Bible.

The first writing from the string of pseudepigraphal books that we will examine is the Letter of Aristeas (LA). “The so-called LA is a primary source for understanding the Septuagint, the version of the Jewish Scriptures in Greek. It purports to describe how the Jewish Law was translated from Hebrew into Greek by seventy-two Jews sent to Alexandria for this purpose.”⁷² Although the LA is written in Greek, James Charlesworth notes that “it hardly reaches the heights needed for a work to be classed as literature.”⁷³ Although the exact date of it is unknown, it is estimated between 250 BC and 100 AD.⁷⁴ It is entirely possible that the author was a Jew based on the details regarding Jewish practices – something that a gentile or a proselyte to Judaism would be incapable of rendering in this manner.

The Essene Gospel of Peace is a second work (EGP). This text, first published in 1928 and then translated into English in 1937, is believed to have been discovered

⁷² James H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 7.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 8.

by Edmond Bordeaux Szekely while studying in the Vatican's Secret Archives. In EGP, Jesus is the central character and teaches his disciples, most notably about food – according to which Jesus was a vegetarian. There is a strong connection between the gospel's central subject and Szekely's concern for food, and it is unsurprising that he published this writing.

Despite the fact that this gospel has been published, the Vatican denies Szekely's visit to the library and the existence of the writing. If the gospel's existence is questioned in the library where it is claimed to have been discovered, it follows that this writing cannot be a source of trust/authority, as its existence in the early centuries is also in doubt.

The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs (TP) is the third work of interest to us. These testaments were written between 110 BC and 100 AD (or 109-106 BC),⁷⁵ and a more precise date is not possible, at least for the time being. It is assumed that Jacob's twelve sons wrote a testament or, more precisely, an epistle of wisdom (even though part of the NT writings are mentioned here – for example Matthew and 1 Thessalonians). For its numerous apocalyptic preoccupations with the Messiah, writing is classified as apocalyptic literature.

The reason that TP is considered pseudepigraphal/apocryphal writing is not only because the first indications of its appearance date back to the second century AD and the patriarchs lived more than 1700 years before, but also because the Bible makes no mention of them or makes no reference to them. At the moment, no consensus exists regarding the provenance of testaments - one faction claims that this

⁷⁵ Robert Henry Charles, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1908), 15.

writing is a Jewish original that has been altered by Christians, while the other faction claims that it is an invented writing.⁷⁶

Although there are twelve testaments, we will focus on the Gad and Asher testaments because they contain references to clean and unclean animals.

The fourth book is Barnabas's Epistle (Barn), which was not discovered until recently and was quoted by Clement of Alexandria,⁷⁷ Origen, Eusebius, Jerome, and other Church Fathers. According to Jean-Baptiste Cotelier,⁷⁸ Origen and Jerome regarded the epistle as authentic and canonical, but Cotelier himself rejects this view. On the contrary, it is presumed to have been written for the benefit of the Ebionites (Jewish Christians) who persisted in rituals and ceremonies.

The author of the Epistle is generally accepted to be from Alexandria, given his affinity for the allegorical approach for which Alexandria was well-known, and because this is where the earliest evidence of the document's existence comes from. It appears to have been written after 70 AD, but prior to Hadrian's rebuilding of Jerusalem following the uprising of 132-135 AD. Greater precision is not possible within these constraints.⁷⁹ The epistle's text was reconstructed using the codex Sinaiticus and the codex Hierosolymitanus, as well as other lesser-known writings.

⁷⁶ Acc J. Davila, *A Difficult Case: The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, accessed March 10, 2022, <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/divinity/rt/otp/abstracts/testoftwelve/>.

⁷⁷ Clement of Alexandria puts Hebrews, 2 John, 3 John and the Epistle of Jude with the Shepherd of Hermas and the Epistle of Barnabas on the same level. See, Samuel Davidson, *The Canon of the Bible* (New York: Peter Eckler Publishing Co., 1877), 139.

⁷⁸ David Lincicum, "The Paratextual Invention of the Term 'Apostolic Fathers'," in *The Journal of Theological Studies* (Volume 66; Issue 1; April 2015), 139–48.

⁷⁹ Acc Davis Glenn, "Epistle of Barnabas," in *Writings*, accessed March 10, 2022, http://www.ntcanon.org/Epistle_of_Barnabas.shtml.

Several attitudes and concepts can be observed in Barn chapter 10, among which are the following: the law's precepts regarding sacrifices and food understood exclusively in a spiritual sense; complete rejection of the OT; and non-recognition of Jewish customs. Thus, the author interprets Gnostic the persons and events of the OT, which provides a profound understanding of the text of Scripture – the prohibition of eating pigs or other unclean animals means the prohibition of association with spoiled and evil people.

Letter of Aristeas

Although the majority of theologians believe that LA was written prior to the Christian era, some believe that the writing could date all the way back to the first century AD. I will, however, assume that LA was written prior to the Christian era. While the writing bears little resemblance to any Old Testament book, there are references to dietary law. More precisely, LA 142-171 develops an intriguing ideology on which we will expand later. The following is the text that is being referred to:

So, to prevent our being perverted by contact with others or by mixing with bad influences, he hedged us in on all sides with strict observances connected with meat and drink and touch and hearing and sight, after the manner of the Law. . . . 'Do not take the contemptible view that Moses enacted this legislation because of an excessive preoccupation with mice and weasels or suchlike creatures. The fact is that everything has been solemnly set in order for us unblemished investigation and amendment of life for the sake of righteousness. The birds which we use are all domesticated and of exceptional cleanliness, their food consisting of wheat and pulse—such birds as pigeons, turtledoves, locusts, partridges, and, in addition, geese and others of the same kind. As to the birds which are forbidden, you will find wild and carnivorous kinds, and the rest which dominate by their own strength, and who find their food at the expense of the aforementioned domesticated birds—which is an injustice; and not only that, they also seize lambs and kids and outrage human beings dead or alive.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ James H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 22.

Aristeas further explains:

By calling them impure, he has thereby indicated that it is the solemn binding duty of those for whom the legislation has been established to practice righteousness and not to lord it over anyone in reliance upon their own strength, nor to deprive him of anything, but to govern their lives righteously, in the manner of the gentle creatures among the aforementioned birds which feed on those plants which grow on the ground and do not exercise a domination leading to the destruction of their fellow creatures. ... Wherefore, in view of your love of learning, I have been induced, Philocrates, to expound to you the solemnity and characteristic outlook of the Law.⁸¹

“Thus, dietary laws teach a moral lesson.”⁸² As far as one can tell in LA, clean and unclean animals have a symbolic interpretation and Jiří Moskala adds, “Aristeas’ main concern while speaking about clean and unclean animals in the rationale behind this prohibition and not the thorough of all details.”⁸³ Allegorical motivated theory asserts that the distinction between “clean and unclean animals is based on the fact that they symbolize/represent various virtues or vices.”⁸⁴ If animals are considered to be clean under dietary laws, they are considered to be virtues; if they are considered to be unclean, they are interpreted to be vices. As the text rendered above indicates, the application of allegorical interpretation regarding to the dietary laws existed prior to the time of the Church Fathers.

LA justifies the dietary laws’ validity by stating that God intended for them to be “hedged” in order “to prevent our being perverted” and “precautions must be taken to prevent (human) morals degenerating to their level.”⁸⁵ However, how? “With strict

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 23-4.

⁸² Jiří Moskala, “The Laws of Clean and Unclean Animals of Leviticus 11: their Nature, Theology, and Rationale (an Intertextual Study),” 20.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 120.

⁸⁵ James H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 23.

observances connected with meat and drink.” As a result of this, we can deduce that dietary laws are not given to the people as a principle, but rather to “avoid perversion” and on the basis of “natural reasoning.” LA follows a fairly common Judeo-Hellenistic tradition in attempting to explain Jewish dietary prohibitions. We find the following meanings in LA’ writings according to this interpretation:

- a. The cloven hoof “is a sign of setting apart each of their actions for good;”⁸⁶
- b. The rumination “is nothing but the recalling of (the creature’s) life and constitution, life being usually constituted by nourishment.”⁸⁷

To begin, Leviticus 11 divides various types of creatures into clean and unclean, and LA renders the majority of these categories. Birds are the first category in here. Allowing them to be food is justified by their domestication. However, this argument cannot be applied to the other categories because not all animals, fish, and creepers are domesticated, and we have no idea what they eat. Priority, however, is given to God’s Word, and the most appropriate course of action is not to seek a logical explanation — although such an explanation may exist — but to adhere to the principle of “it is written.” What distinguishes clean and unclean birds? By their own strength, the unclean birds dominate. Naturally, LA employs this argument (which is plausible) to justify the allegorical interpretation. According to this argument, God intended for his people to: a) not trust in their own strength, but in His; b) not oppress anyone and to work godly; c) to strive for moral integrity and righteousness; and d) to be wise and responsible.

Second, the distinction is based on Leviticus 11’s principle of having cloven hooves and ruminating. Simply put, these aspects are also a symbol and represent “the

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 23-4.

phenomenon of memory,” specifically “the recalling of the creature’s life and constitution.” Another allegorism derived from the category of unclean animals is that they also represent a personality trait – malice and gossip.

Finally, LA regards the dietary laws as valid, but not literally. The words with which he concludes the pericope sent to Philocrates shed light on the author of LA’s mindset - the Law’s characteristic outlook. In addition to dietary law, LA makes reference to moral law when writing about it. LA concludes, however, that “our Law forbids harming anyone in thought or deed.”

The Essene Gospel of Peace

The Essene Gospel of Peace (EGP) is widely believed to have been written by the Apostle John, but there is no evidence to support this. Concerning the reference to dietary law, it appears as though the EGP makes a number of arguments. To begin, it is entirely possible that the EGP’s author was a supporter of Manichaean theology. The Manichaean theology first appeared in the third century AD, and Augustin engaged in a lengthy debate with its adherents. They argued, among other things, that if one is a true believer, he or she must demonstrate this through abstinence from flesh (whether clean or unclean according to Leviticus).

Second, the EGP claims to promote Essene vegetarianism, but according to James Bean,⁸⁸ the intention may be to promote Edmond Bordeaux Szekely’s conceptions of vegetarianism. However, if Szekely desired this, he could use other known literature and was no longer required to “use” EGP.

⁸⁸ James Bean, *Uncovering A Vegetarian Jesus at the Beginning of Christianity*, accessed March 10, 2022, <https://medium.com/sant-mat-meditation-and-spirituality/uncovering-a-vegetarian-jesus-at-the-beginning-ofchristianity-9279741be7c4>.

Finally, we must remember that EGP is not a Szekely invention; it is a part of Essene literature. Moses and dietary laws are mentioned here.

In EGP, Jesus declares cooked food to be dead and that it originates with Satan, as it is a source of suffering and illness. Rather than that, uncooked food is regarded as living food and is a gift from God. To help you better understand the critical portion of our study in the EGP, we've included it below:

Then another said: "Moses, the greatest in Israel, suffered our forefathers to eat the flesh of clean beasts, and forbade only the flesh of unclean beasts. Why, therefore, do you forbid us the flesh of all beasts? Which law comes from God? That of Moses, or your law?" And Jesus answered: "God gave, by Moses, ten commandments to your forefathers. 'These commandments are hard,' said your forefathers, and they could not keep them. When Moses saw this, he had compassion on his people, and would not that they perish. And then he gave them ten times ten commandments." . . . And Jesus continued: "God commanded your forefathers: 'Thou shalt not kill.' But their heart was hardened and they killed. Then Moses desired that at least they should not kill men, and he suffered them to kill beasts. And then the heart of your forefathers was hardened yet more, and they killed men and beasts likewise. But I do say to you: Kill neither men, nor beasts, nor yet the food which goes into your mouth. For if you eat living food, the same will quicken you, but if you kill your food, the dead food will kill you also. For life comes only from life, and from death comes always death. For everything which kills your foods, kills your bodies also. And everything which kills your bodies kills your souls also. And your bodies become what your foods are, even as your spirits, likewise, become what your thoughts are."⁸⁹

We can conclude from the preceding account — and correctly so, because it supports the entire Gospel — that Moses, not God, gave the dietary laws.

Additionally, the dietary laws of Leviticus 11 is recognized, and it can be observed as a perpetuation of it through Jesus' teachings.

In the EGP, dietary laws appear to act as crutches that aid in the keeping of the Ten Commandments. Thus, eating an unclean animal is not sinful unless it violates one of the Ten Commandments, at which point it becomes sin. In other words, this

⁸⁹ Edmond Bordeaux Székely, *The Essene Gospel of Peace*, accessed March 10, 2022, <http://www.hourofthetime.com/lib/Bill%20Cooper/Essene-Gospel-of-Peace.pdf>.

law is powerless in and of itself; it derives its authority from the Ten Commandments—the authority to bless or damn.

What amazes me about the EGP is that it adheres to the fewest possible commandments. In other words, the number of commandments is a function of one's proximity to God; the closer one is to Him, the fewer commandments there are, namely ten. Israel has numerous commandments – which were given by Moses, not by God, due to their great separation from God. If we accept this conclusion in its entirety, we can assert that it contradicts Scripture, as the Bible states that “the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying” (Lev 11:1). Thus, God commanded the dietary law, not Moses.

Additionally, the EGP text contains parallels to other NT writings. For instance, 1 Corinthians 6, 8; Matthew 10; Luke 10; John 14; Philemon 1; 2 Peter; Jude, and Revelation 1 all have parallels. What is the conclusion? The gospel text is modeled after the New Testament writings. Nonetheless, contradictions exist between Jesus' practices in the canonical gospels and the present one, as Jesus ate fish and even offered it to others, whereas here, fish are neither consumed nor recommended for consumption.

Another interpretation of the EGP is that the Israelites were permitted to slaughter animals in order to avoid killing other people. According to the EGP, this is the only argument that justifies animal slaughter, but how do we account for the sacrifices at sanctuary? We can say that people had to be killed at the Sanctuary, but were they replaced by animals because they couldn't be killed? If we consider that the animal died instead of the man who sinned, we can draw a tenuous parallel to what was stated previously, but the EGP continues by stating that an animal may be killed only if the killing saves a man's life – that is, if the man's life is threatened by the

animal that attacks him. While vegetarianism is encouraged and animal consumption is prohibited, it is noted that milk may be consumed.

Due to the fact that EGP promotes vegetarianism, reading it by modern readers has elicited a variety of reactions. While this is not authentic writing, it elicits strong reactions from readers, who say they now have another reason to become vegetarians.⁹⁰ As a result, this EGP discourages the consumption of animals, much less unclean animals.

The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs

According to what we know so far, the Testaments (TP), or fragments of them, were discovered at Qumran⁹¹ and are an imitation of Jacob's blessing to his 12 sons described in Genesis 49. There are few early Christian references to this writing. Only Origen – in his Homily to Joshua – and Jerome – in his Tract on Psalm 15 – make reference to this writing, but without commenting on its content. However, both authors acknowledge the uncanonical nature of this writing. Tertullian is said to have borrowed an explanation from TP, but it is unknown whether this is the case or whether it is merely a literary coincidence. Additionally, the title appears among the 60 books of the anonymous list titled Athanasius's Synoptic Table.⁹²

George Eldon Ladd was talking about TP in this way:

The testaments of the twelve patriarchs contains apocalyptic eschatology, but the literary form of the book, as a whole, excludes it from the apocalyptic literary

⁹⁰ The testimonies can be read on Jennifer Thompson, *Earliest Raw Food and Fasting Book: The Ancient Essene Gospel of the Peace*, accessed March 10, 2022, <http://healthybliss.net/earliest-raw-food-andfasting-book-essene-gospel-of-the-peace/>.

⁹¹ Acc Frank Moore Cross, *The ancient library of Qumrân and modern Biblical studies*, (The Haskell Lectures Series, 1956-1957; Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980), 150.

⁹² Theodor van Zahn, *Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons* (Vol. 2; Erlangen: Deichert, 1892), 290-2.

genre. Each of the twelve patriarchs gives a brief summary of his life, makes a moral application, and usually gives a brief prediction of the future of his descendants. In its form, the book is imitative prophecy rather than apocalyptic. Its primary concern is ethical rather than eschatological and contains a universalism that is alien to the ordinary spirit of the apocalypses.⁹³

Even though it is not included in the apocalypse section, this writing has been the subject of numerous thorough investigations, but many of the unresolved issues remain. TP also places a premium on ethics, “with a notable emphasis on inner justice and the ethics of love; but this gives the book a special touch to the ordinary atmosphere of apocalyptic literature. In form, the book is not, in fact, apocalyptic.”⁹⁴ The TP is comprised of twelve testaments, one for each of Jacob’s twelve sons: “Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Joseph, and Benjamin.”⁹⁵ We only have references to clean and unclean animals in Gad’s and Asher’s testaments.

The Testament of Gad

Gad’s testament begins with his animosity toward his brother Joseph. Despite his hatred for Joseph, Gad exhorts others, and implicitly himself, to love one another. This testament contains a reference to the consumption of lamb – an animal deemed clean by Mosaic law. The following is the text referred to in Chapter 1:

And Joseph told our father that the sons of Zilpah and Bilhah were slaying the best of the beasts, and devouring them without the knowledge of Judah and Reuben. For he saw that I delivered a lamb out of the mouth of the bear, and I put the bear to death; and the lamb I slew, being grieved concerning it that it could not live, and we ate it, and he told our father. And I was wroth with Joseph for that thing until the day that he was sold into Egypt. And the spirit of hatred was in me, and I wished not either to see Joseph or to hear him. And he rebuked us to

⁹³ George Eldon Ladd, *Prezența viitorului* (Oradea: Cartea creștină, 1997), 80.

⁹⁴ Acc Maldwyn Hughes, *The Ethics of Jewish Apocryphal Literature* (Charleston: Forgotten Books, 2015), 51-62.

⁹⁵ 1 Chr 2:1,2.

our faces for having eaten of the flock without Judah. And whatsoever things he told our father, he believed him.⁹⁶

Even if there is no mention of unclean animals and only a seemingly normal statement is made, we can see the story's attitude. It turns out that the sons of Zilpah and Bilhah had a habit of eating from the flock, and the flock consisted entirely of clean animals – most often sheep. This is not a serious matter, but the fact that they were greedy was serious, and Joseph, being honest, was unable to conceal their habit from others.

The Testament of Asher

While Asher's testament is the shortest of the twelve, it is the most significant for our research. It begins in an unusual manner; whereas the others begin with the author on his deathbed, this one begins with the author "he is still healthy." The testament's central theme is man's duality between passion and virtue, or two modes of existence. Asher's indication throughout the testament is to pursue sincerity and purity.

Asher discusses eating and not eating in the second chapter of the testament.

The following is the text:

Another committeth adultery and fornication, and abstaineth from meats; yet in his fasting he worketh evil, and by his power and his wealth perverteth many, and out of his excessive wickedness worketh the commandments: this, too, hath a twofold aspect, but the whole is evil. Such men are as swine or hares; for they are half clean, but in very deed are unclean. For God in the Heavenly Tablets hath thus declared.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Philip Schaff, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* 9.1 (ANF, 8:46, trans. Roberts and Donaldson).

⁹⁷ Philip Schaff *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* 10.2 (ANF, 8:49, trans. Roberts and Donaldson).

Unlike the EGP, which asserts that the tablets of the law were broken and Moses substituted new laws, this passage asserts that the heavenly tablets contain references to the pig and the rabbit. These two animals are included in the list of unclean animals mentioned in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14. It's intriguing that Asher, or the author, chooses two animals to complete the picture of a completely unclean animal, that is, one that does not ruminate and does not have a divided hoof, or one that ruminates and has a divided hoof. We can only conclude from this remark that the author was familiar with or at least aware of Moses' writings in Leviticus, and if we assert that the testament was written around AD 100, this finding is relevant.

By recalling the purity of the pig and rabbit first, Asher wishes to emphasize the painting's two faces – clean in man's eyes, but unclean according to God's commandments. Indeed, it states that God gave the law, and juxtaposing the two – the law and animal uncleanliness – argues that it is also the dietary laws, even if it does not remind them of being ingested.

After examining these Testaments, it is clear that neither Asher, nor Gad, nor any other Patriarch suggests that no distinction should be made between clean and unclean animals; on the contrary, they all support this Mosaic law, with the Testament of Asher being the strongest supporter.

The Epistle of Barnabas

Brief introduction to the contents of the Epistle

- In the Epistle of Barnabas (Barn) 1:5, the author conveys the idea that the words he is about to write are not his own, but “he has received,” and that he is writing them to bolster the spirits of believers: “that with faith their knowledge may also be perfected.”

- Emphasizing the Lord's three doctrines: the hope of life, the beginning, and the end. (Barn 1:6)
- In Barn 2:3-6 (similar to Isa 1:11-14), it is claimed that God does not desire sacrifices or burnt offerings, and that Jesus Christ abolished these things by offering a new Law free of obligation.
- A different interpretation is given in 4:8, where it is cited from Exod 32:7 and Deut 9:12. The author states here that when Moses broke the two tablets of the Law, the covenant contained within them was broken – ignoring the fact that Moses received additional tables – and Jesus' covenant is sealed in the hearts.
- In Barn 17:1, he emphasizes that everything he has written is for men's benefit because these teachings concern salvation—including diet interpretation.

The interpretation of the animals in the Epistle of Barnabas

In Chapter 10 of the Barn, one of the modern commentators' opinions/theories is used to suggest the reasons for these laws, namely the allegorical theory. Jiří Moskala says that “the author of this letter contends that the purpose of the dietary laws is didactic, to teach the proper behavior of people that they might observe in the animals characteristics that should be emulated or avoided.”⁹⁸ The distinction between animals, according to the allegorical theory, “is based on the fact that they symbolize/represent various virtues or vices; clean animals are virtues, while unclean

⁹⁸ Jiří Moskala, “The Laws of Clean and Unclean Animals of Leviticus 11: their Nature, Theology, and Rationale (an Intertextual Study),” 32.

animals are vices.”⁹⁹ This theory is extremely ancient, dating all the way back to the pre-Christian period, as evidenced by its presence in the LA.¹⁰⁰

It’s fascinating to observe how this theory has been applied “in the various communities where it has been proposed. In Jewish circles, this allegorical method was used to defend the validity of dietary laws, whereas in Christian circles, the same allegorical method was used”¹⁰¹ to absolve themselves of the obligation to follow these same dietary laws.

The meaning of “clean animals”

Clean animals represent people who have persevered in meditation, ministry, and prayer. After receiving the “food,” he expresses gratitude to the giver, and through rumination, he enjoys what he received. On the one hand, every animal that has its hoof split and ruminates is pure because the cleft in the hoof represents stability in righteousness or following the path of justice, as well as the expectation of Christ’s return – referring to people. Rumination, on the other hand, is the proper food for righteousness, the “Word” (which penetrates outwardly through surrender and is recalled internally by thought). At the same time, rumination embodies the concept of continuous meditation leading to good deeds. Thus, the Christian’s life is centered on “today,” not on a future date.

LA demonstrate that Judaism has already interpreted the positive aspects of dietary law allegorically. For the split hoof denotes, (1) the separation of each act for the sake of justice and (2) the separation of Jews from non-Jewish immorality

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 120.

¹⁰⁰ Henry John Thackeray, *The letter of Aristeas* (Series 2; Hellenistic-Jewish texts; London: Society for promoting Christian knowledge, 1918), 145-148, 153.

¹⁰¹ Jiří Moskala, “The Laws of Clean and Unclean Animals of Leviticus 11: their Nature, Theology, and Rationale (an Intertextual Study),” 122.

(particularly sexual), whereas rumination denotes the memory of God's wondrous deeds. According to Philo, those who have their hoof split but do not ruminate represent immoral philosophies.

Clement of Alexandria was familiar with at least two additional interpretations of Psalm 1:1.¹⁰² When we compare the allegorism of these exhibitions, we see two distinct directions for interpretation — ethical and doctrinal.

It is the initial support and is quite similar to Hellenistic Jewish interpretations of dietary laws. Clement of Alexandria, on the other hand, demonstrates how doctrinal symbolism has been stylized in Christianity as a logical application of a Gnostic ethical approach applicable to specific groups of people.

The meaning of “unclean animals”

Unclean animals are equated with passionate people in allegory. A passionate man cannot be called a man, as he resembles an animal. If the darkened mind caused by passions is what distinguishes us from animals, then we are prey to our own instinctual desires and manifestations.

Pigs are equated with heretics who know enough to invoke God on occasion or with natural Christians who indulge in immoral sensuality. On the one hand, the pig discovers insane pleasure and unclean desire; intemperance in idleness. On the other hand, the pig is a symbol for people who forget about God when they are prosperous, but remember Him when they face difficulties and shortcomings. When a pig is full, it sleeps; when it is hungry, it squeaks; and when it is fed, it calms down.

¹⁰² For the interpretation of Psalm 1, see Raphael Loewe, *The Jewish Midrashim and patristic and scholastic exegesis of the Bible* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1957), 492-514.

However, Barn states that neither a hawk, nor a swift-flying creature, nor an eagle should be eaten, conveying the message that approaching those who secure their lives through robbery is not acceptable, and he allegorizes other people similarly.¹⁰³

The eagle, the hawk, and the raven are all examples of people you should avoid “cleaving” to because they do not know how to earn their food ethically, but rather through lawlessness and kidnapping the fortunes of others. They appear to be innocent, but they lurk and wait for an opportune moment to kidnap – much like the birds mentioned previously who are unable to earn their food and therefore idle.

According to Barn 10:9 we can take the account as Moses has spoken in a spiritual sense, but Moses was commanded by God to abstain from consumption, and the commandment was literal.¹⁰⁴ The author of the epistle believes that the Israelites misinterpreted the commandment concerning abstinence from unclean animals. Thus, Barnabas¹⁰⁵ asserts that reading this prohibition literally – and not spiritually – is a mistake.

Interpretation errors

Barnabas writes in Barn 10:1 that the Levitical diet laws refer to three doctrines (Gk. *tría dógmata*), which he repeats in verse 9. However, he discusses three additional commandments in verses 6-8, which appear to contradict his numerical claim in verses 1 and 9.

¹⁰³ Acc Robert A. Kraft, *The Epistle Of Barnabas: Its Quotations And Their Sources* (Unpublished PhD Dissertation; Harvard University, 1961), 196-7.

¹⁰⁴ Deut 14:8.

¹⁰⁵ Whenever the name of Barnabas appear we mean the author of Barn, since we do not know who is he.

Discourse on the first three commandments is distinct from discourse on the second group of three commandments in several ways. Verses 3-5 (from chapter 10) appear to have a schematic relationship with the Pentateuch as found in Leviticus 11 and Deut 14. Thus, in Leviticus, the prohibition against eating pigs (Lev 11:4) is followed by the prohibition against eating fish without scales (Lev 11:7), which is followed by the prohibition against eating certain types of birds (Lev 11:10). While the order in Barn 10:3-5 is reversed from Leviticus (fish and birds appear first), the categories (animals, fish, and birds) remain the same. Unlike this passage, Barn 10:6-8 is entirely composed of terrestrial animals, one of which, the hyena (Barn 10:7), is not mentioned in the LXX or MT, and the condemnation is limited to sexual habits, which are based on zoological speculation.¹⁰⁶ Furthermore, Barn 10:1; 3-5; 9 has a different grammatical structure than 10:6-8.

Barn 10:10, which is an application of Ps 1:1 to the three types of animals described in verses 3-5, does not belong after verse 9, but rather after verses 3-5 (which also mention the same creatures).¹⁰⁷ Barn 10:11, which contains an allegorical interpretation of the prohibition against the use of animals that do not ruminate and do not have a split hoof in food, appears to have been added to the preceding text and bears no literary relationship to it.

However, it is worth noting Klaus Wengst's perspective on the chapter's construction. Wengst maintains that verses 1, 3, 5, and 9-10 are derived from a

¹⁰⁶ For a detailed discussion of the pagan history of this zoological speculation, see Robert Kraft, *The Epistle Of Barnabas*, 200-209 which reproduces Kraft's discussion in abbreviated form.

¹⁰⁷ Clement, with some modifications, cite this passage in *Stromata* 2:67, but gives another interpretation of Psalm 1:1. In general, this Psalm has been used in parenetic contexts and with some frequency by Christians.

source. Verses 6-8 are from a different source — not the source of the preceding verses — and may have been added to the original by Barnabas.¹⁰⁸

At 10:2a, the author introduces what appears to be a personal implication (as indicated by the use of *péros gé toi*, a term that frequently refers to the author's original feelings). Verses 2, 11, and 12 are considered to be the only ones in the chapter that do not cast doubt on fatherhood.

This may lead us to regard the chapter as being composed of two blocks of tradition (possibly three, if we include 10:11), which were haphazardly combined. Indeed, the interpretations offered are quite potent in a certain traditional sense.

Chapter 10 takes a different tone than chapters 2, 3, 9, 15, and 16, which all deal with Jewish ritual legislation. Not only is this evident in the chapter's lack of a Christian dimension, but also in the atmosphere of interpretation that it traverses. The allegory enunciated here appears to be more sophisticated (zoological speculation) and developed. This could imply that the text in chapter 10 is a modified version by Barnabas with a different provenance than the rest of the epistle. In other words, we have sufficient evidence in Chapter 10 of Barn to believe that it is interpolation.

Robert Kraft contended that there is reason to believe that the traditions found in Barn originated in a Jewish-Hellenistic school. "Here is one of the clearest indications of Barnabas's close relationship with the traditions of an extremely sophisticated late Judaism,"¹⁰⁹ he writes. He finds support for this in LA¹¹⁰ and

¹⁰⁸ Acc Klaus Wengst, "Barnabasbrief," in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* (vol. 5; Boston: De Gruyter, 1980), 238–241.

¹⁰⁹ Robert A. Kraft, *The Epistle of Barnabas*, 197–198. See also, Hans Windisch, *Der Barnabasbrief* (Handbuch zum Neuen Testament Series; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1920), 316, who claims that Barnabas took this passage directly from Judaism.

¹¹⁰ Henry John Thackeray. *The letter of Aristeas*, 128.

Philo,¹¹¹ which contain spiritualized/ethical readings of the dietary laws. Although Barnabas is unlikely to have drawn directly on these two sources for what he writes in chapter 10 (the parallels are insufficient to imply literary dependence), it seems likely that Barnabas would draw on a fairly common Judeo-Hellenistic tradition of interpretation, as confirmed by LA, who attempted to explain Jewish dietary prohibitions in an apologetic context and allegorical interpretation.

Kraft's thesis becomes more compelling when we consider the following: (1) there is nothing specifically Christian in the chapter, perhaps except for the unfavorable references to "their"; (2) the interpretive format of verses 6-7 and 11 is question and answer;¹¹² and (3) the final words of verse 11 (*Blépete, pōs ènomothētēsen Moüsēs kalōs*) have a strong apologetic tone. As Hans Windisch put it, "It almost sounds like a defense, as does the already Jewish allegory that had an apologetic character."¹¹³

Even if we accept Barnabas's use of tradition here, we should take note of certain peculiarities in the chapter as allusions to Barnabas's work and Kraft's "strictly parenetic" interpretation.¹¹⁴ Barnabas states in Barn 10:2a that Moses' legislation, the dietary law, was never intended to be interpreted literally, but rather in a spiritual sense. This is repeated in verses 9 and 12. One could argue that Barnabas appropriated and used these statements. Kraft is adaptable to the extent that he

¹¹¹ André Mosès, *De specialibus legibus III et IV* (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1970), 100.

¹¹² See the interrogative words *πρὸς τί* that introduce the question of verses 6 and 7; and the three questions in verse 11 introduced by *τί λέγει, τί οὐδὲν λέγει, τί δὲ τὸ διχηλοῦν*.

¹¹³ Hans, Windisch, *Der Barnabasbrief*, 364.

¹¹⁴ Robert. A. Kraft, *The Epistle of Barnabas*, 197.

believes the chapter originated in liberal Jewish circles. “There is no reason to believe that Jews did not feel similarly about dietary laws.”¹¹⁵ However, this is not a satisfactory explanation for the intrusive nature of these verses,¹¹⁶ nor for the fact that the Jews are clearly perceived as false interpreters in verses 9 and 12.¹¹⁷

Additionally, it is relevant to our argument that we find nowhere in existing Christian literature the thesis that Jews should not have literally followed ritual laws. For instance, Justin, Tertullian,¹¹⁸ Origen¹¹⁹ and Novatian¹²⁰ all take a literal interpretation of the laws - albeit in different ways. Notably, Clement of Alexandria, who demonstrates a particular proclivity for allegorizing the dietary laws by quoting Barnabas 10 and for allegorical interpretations of dietary laws in general,¹²¹ does not

¹¹⁵ Robert Kraft, *The Epistle of Barnabas*, 220. And his conclusion: “In short, it would be wrong to assume that Barnabas' apparent antagonism to a literal interpretation of the food laws given by Moses necessarily stems from Christian antagonism to the Jewish Torah. Once again, the tradition in Barnabas seems to stand somewhere in the tradition of a non-cultic Jewish base towards an anti-Jewish Christianity.”

¹¹⁶ 10:2, where we find the first statement that the law should be interpreted only spiritually, is introduced by *πέρας γέ τοι*, one of Barnabas's favorite connective phrases, usually indicating a commentary of its own. 10:9, in reference to the lust of the flesh - jews also appear as a complement; and verse 12 is Barnabas's own conclusion to the entire passage.

¹¹⁷ This is the particular case in the introductory words of the verse 12: *ἀλλὰ πόθεν ἐκείνοις ταῦτα νοῆσαι ἢ σσινιέναι*.

¹¹⁸ Ernest Evans, *Adversus Marcionem* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 2:18.

¹¹⁹ Origen interprets dietary laws as referring to people and against obvious opposition such an interpretation arises. But the details of his interpretation bear no resemblance to those found in Barnabas 10.

¹²⁰ Some researchers claim that Novatian is confident in Barnabas for the interpretation of dietary laws. While it is true that, like Barnabas, Novatian interprets dietary laws in terms of prohibitions against human vices, there is no justification for arguing literary dependence. If Novatian mentions 16 animals, all of them are mentioned in Leviticus. Barnabas mentions ten, some of which are not found in LXX, and only five appear in Novatian. Of these five, only two of the annexed interpretations agree.

¹²¹ Clement is the Christian closest to the interpretative tradition represented by Barnabas 10.

appear to advocate exclusively for an allegorical interpretation¹²² or to perform anti-Jewish interpretations of these laws.

Some may point to Diognetus 4:2 as a possible parallel to what we find in Barn. While it is true that Diognetus condemns Jewish dietary laws and other ritual laws, declaring them worthless and never implying their legitimacy, he does not substantiate his argument against their interpretation of Scripture. His arguments against Jewish ritual laws are entirely rationalistic. He sees no reason to argue for their abolition or fulfillment through Christ, or for their allegorical interpretation.

The biblical allegory

Even though Barnabas is not advocating the abolition of the dietary law, we believe it is necessary to address allegory situations found in the Bible in order to discern the difference between biblical allegory and the way the allegory in Barn is used by the author.

We see in the Bible that God distinguishes between those who are obedient to Him and those who are not, referring to them as sheep and goats. Additionally, we will notice in what follows that Scripture frequently draws parallels between unclean animals and humans. Certain animals' personalities and behaviors are exposed to certain individuals in order to reveal their true selves. We will list some animals and plants that appear in the Bible below.

- Lion. In Gen 49:9, Jacob describes Judas, stating that he “is a lion’s cub.” Through this figure of speech, we can learn about Judas that he was not only

¹²² To this end, see Stromata 2.105:1-3, where Clement clearly claims compliance with a valid date of one of the dietary laws: “The law gives us a preliminary education in the acquisition of continence from the use of animals, the prohibition of the consumption of animals that are naturally fat, like the pig.”

strong, but also growing – from lion cub to mature lion. The lion represents strength, and when Judas is identified with a lion, he wishes to be told that he will be strong, that he will rule, and that he will be unaffected by anyone.

- Donkey. Issachar, another of Jacob’s sons, is referred to as the “rawboned donkey” (Gen 49:14). At first glance, we might assume Jacob refers to Issachar as the rawboned donkey as a sign of weakness due to his lack of fat, but this is not the case. This appointment denotes a robust constitution capable of withstanding adversity. When we examine the history of the tribe of Issachar, we see that he was content with what he had, he worked in agriculture – he carried burdens – and he had no desire for dominion.

- Serpent. The serpent is symbolic of Satan (Gen 3:1) because he used it to deceive Eve. The Bible portrays the serpent as extremely cunning and possessing inappropriate tendencies – precisely what Satan possesses. In Revelation, Satan is once again symbolized by the serpent, but this time by a “serpent of old” (Rev. 12:9; 20:2) and dragon. Dan, Jacob’s son, is another character who is referred to as a serpent (Gen 49:17). The association is not coincidental when we consider that his tribe is not mentioned among the sons of Jacob’s tribes in Rev. 7. Dan is said to “bite the heel of the horse” and Satan is said to “bite the woman’s heel” (Gen 3:15). It is easier to bite a horse than it is to bite a man, and the parallel between the two reflects their inclination, which was to rebel against God. Dan’s appointment as a snake indicates that he was cunning and an instigator (Judges 18), implying that he had an unsuitable attitude toward the other tribes.

- Deer. According to Prov 7:22, those who commit adultery are like “the ox that goes to the butchery, like a deer running toward the snare.” What does this

entail? By using the deer as a symbol, he implies that these young men are devoid of life experience, are vibrant and alive until the moment of death, and are eager for adventure. In Gen 49:21, James describes Naphtali as “a deer let loose.” The deer’s significance in the Naphtali tribe is obscure. There are no accounts in the Bible that support this symbolism.

- Wolf. This animal is used to represent several individuals: Benjamin (Gen 49:27); judges in Israel who lack faith in the Lord and are greedy (Zeph 3:3); and false prophets (Matt 7:15). However, it is also used to represent those who opposed Jesus and the believers (Acts 20:29). In reference to Benjamin, the word connotes the tribe’s bravery and warrior spirit. Benjamin’s tribe manifested a volcanic spirit resembling a wolf to attack anyone who disturbed them (see Gibeah’s inhabitants – Judg 20:21; Canaan’s inhabitants – Judg 5:14, etc.) and developed extraordinary fighting abilities (archers, slingshot throwers). Consider the greedy judges as the wolf’s attitude toward those who are unprepared or helpless. The apostate individuals mentioned by Paul in Acts or the false prophets allegorized by wolves in Matt 7:15 represent their desire to destroy and destroy the souls of believers.

- Dog. In the OT, God refers to Israel’s rulers as dumb dogs (Isa 56:10). This statement implies that they are even less intelligent than a dog, as they lacked even the intelligence of a normal dog. Rather than seeking out what was beneficial, they sought out their own priorities, and rather than watching over the people, “they ate” them. This is a grave charge leveled against the rulers. In the NT, Paul compares the Israelites to dogs without a master. The dog is described as having their own activity, that is, they were deserving of contempt for causing hardship to Christians and occasionally persecuting them. Only pagans were referred to as dogs, but Paul

broadens the definition of the “unclean” by referring to some of Israel as dogs (Phil 3:2). What is a “dog’s” attitude? His attitude is one of discontent, discontent, and malice.

- Fox. Jesus Christ referred to Herod as a fox in Luke 13:32. Through the fox, Jesus emphasizes Herod’s deception and ability to adapt his behavior to the circumstances.

- Briers and thorns. In Ezek 2:6, it is stated that the children of Israel are briers and thorns, implying that they would demonstrate opposition to Ezekiel’s words, mock him, and attempt to frighten him through their attitude. While it is difficult to avoid briers when one is walking among them, this is God’s encouragement to Ezekiel to disregard those who wish to harm and discourage him.

The examples above are just a sampling of the numerous allegorical references found throughout the Bible, but there are many more. Each allegorical reference in the Bible is accompanied by the allegorized individual.

The allegorical interpretation in Alexandria

From the arguments so far Barn belongs to the Alexandrian school of interpretation. So, we find it necessary to highlight some hermeneutical methods and the history of the Alexandrian School. The reason why the methods of interpretation will be highlighted is in order to be able to differentiate the allegorical method from the other methods of interpretation.

Hermeneutical methods

Numerous hermeneutical methods of interpretation can be identified throughout the history of Bible interpretation, but we will highlight five of them, focusing on the allegorical one, which – according to our study’s chronological

classification – is the second method of interpretation. These methods are as follows: mystical; allegorical; devotional; literal; and rational.

The mystical method

The mystical method originated with the Hague method of exegesis (textual interpretation), which was developed by Jews in Palestine during the intertestamental period. This method developed as a result of interpreters' confusion between application and interpretation.¹²³ According to Walter Elwell, the mystical method was codified during the time of the Geonim Jewish-Babylonian students (1000-600 BC),¹²⁴ who founded what is now known as Kabbalism.

As we will see later in the allegorical method, this method rejects the meaning that emerges clearly and literally from the text of Scripture in favor of a hidden one, but it differs from the allegorical method – which offers only a hidden meaning – in that it indicates a range of possible meanings for each passage.

The mystical method's hermeneutical system¹²⁵ analyzes Scripture allegorical or analogically and by interpreting words and letters according to their numerical pair, resulting in the creation of new letters and words that can be interpreted.¹²⁶

The allegorical method

The term “allegory” is derived from the Greek words *ἄλλος*, which means another, and *ἀγορεύω*, which means to speak in assembly. It was originally a figure of

¹²³ Acc Kevin Conner, Ken Malmin, *Interpreting the Scriptures* (Portland, Oregon: City Bible Publication, 1995), 24.

¹²⁴ Walter Elwell, *Evangelical dictionary of the theology* (Baker reference library series; Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academy, 2001), 598.

¹²⁵ Sometimes it is also called the method of spiritualization.

¹²⁶ Acc Walter Elwell, *Evangelical dictionary of the theology*, 598.

speech defined by Cicero as a “continuous stream of metaphors.”¹²⁷ John MacQueen asserts that at least three types of allegory are employed: figurative allegory, narrative allegory, and typological allegory. It is considered figurative allegory in 1 Corinthians 13; narrative allegory in Luke 15:11-32, the parable of the prodigal son;¹²⁸ and typological allegory is the exegetical method that deals with events and OT figures that combine historical reality and prophetic meaning.

This method is diametrically opposed to literal interpretation because it is believed that the literal meaning is merely a pretext for reaching a much deeper meaning, spiritualizing it.

Numerous representatives of the allegorical method exist, including Plato – among the Greeks; Philo – among the Jews; and Origen – among the Church Fathers and an adherent of Philo’s principle. This method developed with the assistance of the Alexandrian School, under whose tutelage it reached its pinnacle, bridging biblical theology and Greek philosophy.

Dwight Pentecost¹²⁹ identifies several dangers associated with the allegorical method of interpretation, which we will also list:

1. This method frequently fails to interpret Scripture. Scripture is regarded as “a total nothingness” devoid of depth.

¹²⁷ Everett Ferguson *et al*, *Encyclopedia of early Christianity* (Garland reference library of the humanities; New York: Garland Publishing, 1997), 23.

¹²⁸ Acc John MacQueen, *Allegory* (London; Methuen, 1970), 18.

¹²⁹ Acc Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come* (Grands Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing, 1958), 5-6.

2. The interpreter's mind, not Scripture, is the authority for interpretation. This danger is real, given that one of hermeneutics' basic principles is that the Bible interprets itself.

3. The reader of the interpretation is unable to test the interpreter's conclusions.

The allegorical method places the interpreter in a vulnerable position because it contains no indication or inspiration for the interpretation that will follow, which can be subjective because everyone interprets differently, but is also frequently irrational.

The devotional method

According to the devotional method,¹³⁰ the primary purpose of the Bible was to nourish the spirituality of believers. The mystics' game exemplifies this mode of interpretation.

Berhard Ramm defines this method as "a method that emphasizes the edifying aspects with the intention of developing a spiritual life."¹³¹ The spell may also be interpreted or applied devotionally - we do not rule this out - but only after receiving a literal and historical interpretation¹³² that is consistent with the interpreter's doctrine.

According to this interpretation, the Bible contains instructions on how many rooms to include in the house we wish to build, what color to paint it, and at what cardinal point to locate its residence, among other things. While we agree that many biblical principles can be applied today, we do not believe that they can be applied

¹³⁰ In other places we can identify it by the applicative method.

¹³¹ Berhard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation* (Boston: W.A. Wilde, 1956), 60.

¹³² Acc Kevin Conner, *Interpreting the Scriptures*, 26.

universally. For instance, God instructed Abraham to leave his land — a requirement not found in all people of faith in the OT — as if we, too, must leave our country.

While the devotional method may have several flaws, we will mention two: a) It employs an allegorical approach to the use of OT;¹³³ b) This interpretation cannot be used in place of doctrinal and exegetical studies.¹³⁴

The grammatical-historical method

This interpretation method, also known as the literal method, asserts that the text's fundamental meaning is suggested by grammatical and historical factors. It is endorsed by the likes of Theodore of Mopsuestia, John Chrysostom, Martin Luther, and Jean Calvin.

According to Dwight Pentecost, “the literal method of interpretation is that method which gives each word the same fundamental meaning that it would have in normal, ordinary, ordinary use, whether in written, verbal or thoughtful use.”¹³⁵

A word can have multiple meanings when used literally, depending on the context in which it is used. This method is also used by NT writers who take passages from the OT and interpret them literally most of the time, but it does not exclude the use of figurative language¹³⁶, occasionally symbols or figures of speech.

¹³³ Acc Berhard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*, 62.

¹³⁴ For a more detailed study of these “weaknesses” see, Kevin Conner, *Interpreting the Scriptures*, 26.

¹³⁵ Acc Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come*, 9.

¹³⁶ A development of this subject is found in Berhard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*, 100.

By evaluating this method, we discover that it is the most frequently used in biblical interpretation, the most accurate in terms of scriptural fidelity, and it is the objective upon which secondary meaning is predicated.

The rational method

According to the rational method, the discernment of the reader of scripture is sufficient to discern scriptural truth from error. Thus, if the Bible deviates from human logic, it is neither authentic nor true. In this manner, authority is transferred from God to man, who is regarded as the ultimate authority.

Why did this mode of interpretation develop? Precisely out of a desire to reject the supernatural – an unsolved concept in human reason – and out of a desire to exclude divine inspiration, but if the supernatural and inspiration are not rejected, an attempt is made to rationally explain them. By employing this method, certain biblical doctrines (such as creation, inspiration, and so forth) are omitted.

Alexandrian School

The Alexandria School (AS) is frequently “associated with early Christian theologians such as Clement of Alexandria and Origen,”¹³⁷ but it is also recognized as one of the early Christian centers of influence. Thus, the Alexandrian School’s most prominent representatives are Clement of Alexandria and Origen.

¹³⁷ Acc Nicoleta Martian, *Despre școala creștină din Alexandria în secolele II-III* (Studia Universitatis Babeș-Boyai; Cluj-Napoca, 2005), 75-110.

Alexandria was home to one of the most renowned and organized universities in the first centuries AD, as well as two libraries. According to Eusebius, the object of AS was Scripture.¹³⁸

With the passage of time, Christianity began to adopt the philosophical influences of the culture in which they lived. As a result, a school of thought was established in Alexandria, a city where Christianity was practiced at a high level. There are two distinct teaching cycles here: biblical exegesis and philosophy; and ethics and dialectics in conjunction with natural science.

AS embraced an allegorical interpretation of the Bible, believing that it conceals the truth and can be revealed through allegory. AS was preoccupied with determining the spiritual significance of Scripture.

AS' theology is different from other theologies in that it embraces gnosis concepts found in both Greek philosophy and Gnosticism. According to AS, the "literal reading is a kind of code that must be deciphered in order to obtain the true meaning,"¹³⁹ and the sole literal approach is regarded as superficial and insufficient.

Clement of Alexandria is credited with being the first Christian theologian and author to make use of allegorical interpretation. He argues that the Bible has concealed the gospel message from those who despise it and that it must be sought. Clement of Alexandria uses allegory to argue that the biblical text has five possible interpretations:

a) prophetic interpretation;

¹³⁸ Acc George Celsie, *Gândirea creștin-filosofică a lui Origen în DE PRINCIPIIS și urmările ei până la jumătatea secolului al VI-lea* (Cluj-Napoca: Limes, 2002), 28.

¹³⁹ Roy Zuck, *Basic Bible Interpretation* (Colorado Springs: Cook Communications, 1991), 29.

- b) philosophical interpretation;
- c) historical narrative;
- d) doctrinal interpretation of the statements;
- e) mystical/symbolic interpretation.

Origen appropriated and developed this meaning, resulting in the establishment of the Alexandrian school of interpretation.

CHAPTER 5

THE DIETARY LAWS IN THE CHURCH FATHERS

All those who refer to dietary laws in the Church Fathers (ANF, NPNF) do so allegorically, arguing that it is a distinctive Jewish element that should no longer be applied literally to Christians. However, as we will argue later, there were Christians who strictly adhered to the dietary laws. The Church Fathers' writings are marked by an anti-Jewish attitude – toward the three distinct elements: “the law given by Moses (especially the Sabbath), the circumcision, the dietary law.”¹⁴⁰

The first Church Father we found relating to the dietary laws is Justin Martyr (100 – 165 AD) where he, “in his treatise on dietary laws, states the purpose of the prohibition: in order that you might keep God before your eyes while you ate and drank, seeing that you were prone and very ready to depart from His knowledge.”¹⁴¹ So, to him the dietary laws have “didactic and disciplinary functions.”¹⁴²

In *Against Heresies*,¹⁴³ Irenaeus (130 – 202 AD) employs an allegory similar to that of LA, while Barn employs an allegory more akin to that of Irenaeus. What I mean is that LA associates Jews with the allegorism of clean animals, whereas Irenaeus associates Christians with the same category. The distinction between LA

¹⁴⁰ Lactantius *The Divine Institutes* 4.17 (ANF, 7:118, trans. Roberts and Donaldson).

¹⁴¹ Jiří Moskala, “The Laws of Clean and Unclean Animals of Leviticus 11: their Nature, Theology, and Rationale (an Intertextual Study),” 35.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ Irenaeus *Against Heresies* 5.8.4 (ANF, 1:534, trans. Roberts and Donaldson).

and Irenaeus is that for LA, Gentiles refers to non-Jews, whereas for Irenaeus, Gentiles refers to all those who are neither Jews nor Christians. Irenaeus interprets Leviticus 11 allegorically, and he employs the allegory developed later by Clement of Alexandria (150 – 215 AD) and the other Church Fathers to encourage Christians to diligently study the Scriptures, to heed its teachings, and to remain on the path of faith.

Clement of Alexandria, a Barnabas supporter, completes and develops the author of the Epistle's allegory. To make his argument persuasive, Clement states, "We who have rightly understood speak the commandments as the Lord wished; wherefore He circumcised our ears and hearts, that we may comprehend these things,"¹⁴⁴ implying that while the Jews did not understand the dietary laws properly, the majority of Christians did. He appears to support the same position as Irenaeus, albeit on a different level, through allegories applied to Christians.

The Alexandrian School, which Clement of Alexandria represented, made connections between Barn 10 and Psalm 1, that is, between the negative and positive aspects of dietary laws and the opening words of Psalm 1.

Clement of Alexandria expands on the allegorism of dietary laws in *Stromata* 5:8: "the church is like animals with a split hoof (they have access to salvation through faith in the Father and the Son) and ruminates (study the Bible night and day, see Ps 1:2)."¹⁴⁵ In essence, Irenaeus and Novatian (200 – 258 AD) both offer the same explanation. Later on, Lactantius (250 – 325 AD) adopted Clement's mode of interpretation and explained Leviticus 11 through allegory. The most frequently used argument is that it is improper for a Christian to imitate the characteristics of an

¹⁴⁴ Clement of Alexandria *The Stromata* 5.8 (ANF, 2:456, trans. Roberts and Donaldson).

¹⁴⁵ Acc Clement of Alexandria *The Stromata* 5.8 (ANF, 2:456, trans. Roberts and Donaldson).

unclean animal, and the mystery mentioned by Clement is also found in Lactantius' writings: "thus all the precepts of the Jewish law have for their object the setting forth of righteousness, since they are given in a mysterious manner, that under the figure of carnal things those which are spiritual might be known."¹⁴⁶ Thus, the Jews did not comprehend properly, but the early Christians grasped the true meaning of the law.

Tertullian (155 – 220 AD), on the other hand, resemble like Justin and Clement that "faith, free in Christ, owes no abstinence from particular meats to the Jewish Law even, admitted as it has been by the apostle once for all to the whole range of the meat-market, that detester of such as, in like manner as they prohibit marrying, so bid us abstain from meats created by God."¹⁴⁷ In this manner, the dietary laws were imposed to the Israelites because they "reproduced Adam's of being more prone to the belly than to God."¹⁴⁸ So, the reason for giving the dietary laws was "in order that man, by observing a perpetual abstinence in certain particulars, might at last the more easily tolerate absolute fasts."¹⁴⁹

Origen (185 – 254 AD) completes this picture in *Against Celsus*¹⁵⁰ where he asserts that abiding by the dietary laws are not "some great thing,"¹⁵¹ and "these distinctions were signs of certain things until the advent of Jesus."¹⁵² In other words, while there are others who abstain from meat entirely ("Egyptian priests,

¹⁴⁶ Lactantius *The Divine Institutes* 4.17 (ANF, 7:119, trans. Roberts and Donaldson).

¹⁴⁷ Tertullian *On Fasting* 2 (ANF, 4:103, trans. Thelwall).

¹⁴⁸ Jiří Moskala, "The Laws of Clean and Unclean Animals of Leviticus 11: their Nature, Theology, and Rationale (an Intertextual Study)," 41.

¹⁴⁹ Tertullian *On Fasting* 5 (ANF, 4:104, trans. Thelwall).

¹⁵⁰ See, Origen *Against Celsus* 4.93 (ANF, 4:538-9, trans. Roberts and Donaldson).

¹⁵¹ Origen *Against Celsus* 5.49 (ANF, 4:565, trans. Roberts and Donaldson).

¹⁵² Origen *Against Celsus* 5.49 (ANF, 4:565, trans. Roberts and Donaldson).

Pythagoreans and the ascetics”¹⁵³), this does not mean they are doing it correctly or that it is significant. To begin, Origen is unsure that dietary laws are offered by God. He has two hypotheses: either God gave it or Moses wrote it through his wisdom. Second, he writes: “arranging the different kinds of animals he has pronounced all those which are supposed by the Egyptians and the rest of mankind to possess the power of divination to be unclean, and, as a general rule, all that are not of that class to be clean.”¹⁵⁴ This view is supported by the fact that certain unclean animals are used allegorically in the Bible as negative examples to emphasize “a certain affinity with a certain species of animal.”¹⁵⁵

Novatian takes the symbolism a step further by asserting that the Jews consider Gentiles (including Christians) to be unclean under the dietary laws. Furthermore, he argues that considering what God created unclean is tantamount to accusing God “as having created unclean things, and to charge upon the divine majesty the guilt of having made things which are abomination, especially when they were pronounced very good.”¹⁵⁶ John Chrysostom (347 – 407 AD) supports Novatian’s argument, adding, “first, no creature of God is unclean: secondly, if it were become so, you have a remedy, seal it, give thanks, and glorify God, and all the uncleanness passes away.”¹⁵⁷ Therefore, why were the dietary laws established? “Not because they were unclean, but to check excessive luxury.”¹⁵⁸ But had this been said,

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ Origen *Against Celsus* 4.93 (ANF, 4:538, trans. Roberts and Donaldson).

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 539.

¹⁵⁶ Novatian *On the Jewish Meats* 3 (ANF, 5:646, trans. Roberts and Donaldson).

¹⁵⁷ John Chrysostom *Homilies on First Epistle to Timothy* 12.4 (NPNF1 13:445, trans. Schaff).

¹⁵⁸ Similar idea we can find in the writing of Philo of Alexandria, see Philo *Special Laws, IV* 101 (trans. Yonge, 625).

they [the Israelites] would not have been persuaded; they were restrained therefore by the fear of uncleanness. . . . God made nothing unclean, for nothing is unclean, except sin only.”¹⁵⁹ Are all the creatures, then, clean? For Novatian and John Chrysostom, the distinction between creatures is not mandatory.

Is God contradicting Himself? According to Novatian (and later Chrysostom), no, because God created all the creatures good and clean (even though there was a distinction between the animals during the flood, which Noah was aware of, see, Genesis 7:2), but spiritually “the law was given to the children of Israel.”¹⁶⁰ That is, first and foremost, to maintain virtuous manners and avoid depravation “by reason of their intercourse with a barbarous people.”¹⁶¹ Thus, while all animals may be consumed, the dietary laws must be interpreted spiritually, as it is a spiritual law. Second, “the Jews might be restrained to the service of one God”¹⁶² and forbidden to associate with other nations (argument also put forward by Origen). Regarding the first argument, John Cassian (360 – 435 AD) appears to contradict it, stating, “how could Noah have distinguished what animals were clean and what were unclean, when the commandment of the law had not yet made a distinction, unless he had been taught by a natural knowledge? . . . God at man’s creation implanted in him naturally complete knowledge of the law.”¹⁶³

What about this spiritual law? “Thus in the animals, by the law, as it were, a certain mirror of human life is established, wherein men may consider the images of

¹⁵⁹ John Chrysostom *Homilies on Titus* 3.16 (NPNF1 13:529-30, trans. Schaff)

¹⁶⁰ Novatian *On the Jewish Meats* 3 (ANF, 5:647, trans. Roberts and Donaldson).

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 648.

¹⁶³ John Cassian *The Conferences* 1.8.23 (NPNF2, 11:384-5, trans. Gibson).

penalties; so that everything which is vicious in men, as committed against nature, may be the more condemned, when even those things, although naturally ordained in brutes, are in them blamed,”¹⁶⁴ Novatian continues. Novatian is a little fanciful here, in addition to allegory, in the series of logical arguments, and such explanations continue for several pages.

Augustine (354 – 430 AD) takes up and develops Novatian’s argument that God did not create anything unclean, and Novatian’s explanations are astounding: “But if we must have the authority of taste to prove the presence in any object of part of God, he must dwell in dates and honey more than in pork, but more in pork than in beans. . . . A young pig roasted is bright in color, and agreeable in smell, and pleasant in taste. Here is a perfect evidence of the presence of the divine substance.”¹⁶⁵

Augustine appears to have borrowed this argument (also found in Jerome [342 – 420 AD] – “delicacy of flavor makes the difference”¹⁶⁶) from Antiochus Epiphanes of 4 Maccabees for one of the two arguments Antiochus uses to convince Eleazar to submit to his influence and claims is that Eleazar should obey natural laws, that is, the pig is also a gift of nature and must be consumed.¹⁶⁷ Pork consumption is an innocent pleasure, and rejecting nature’s gifts entails irrationality and injustice, according to this argument. We do not know how much Augustine was influenced by Augustine’s way of thinking, but the fact is that we find it again. Additionally, Augustine, like the

¹⁶⁴ Novatian *On the Jewish Meats* 3 (ANF, 5:647, trans. Roberts and Donaldson).

¹⁶⁵ Augustin *On the Morals of the Manichaeans* 16.40 (NPNF1, 4:80, trans. Stothert).

¹⁶⁶ Jerome *Letters* 79.7 (NPNF2, 6:166, trans. Fremantle).

¹⁶⁷ 4 Macc 5:8.

other ANF, argues that Leviticus 11 designates certain animals as unclean allegorically “on account of the prefigurative character of that dispensation.”¹⁶⁸

Augustine’s *Reply to Faustus the Manichaeon* contains one of his most explicit arguments. Augustine responds in this text that he believes in the OT and that “the moral precepts of the law are observed by Christians; the symbolical precepts were properly observed during the time that the things now revealed were prefigured.”¹⁶⁹ According to Augustine, the majority of Christians regard the Old Testament as a witness. However, a few Christians observe the dietary laws: “practice circumcision, and keep the Sabbath, and abstain from swine’s flesh and such like things, according to the law, although they profess to be Christians. They are evidently misled, as well as you, by this verse in which Christ says that he came not to destroy the law, but to fulfill it. It would not be easy to reply to such opponents without first getting rid of this troublesome verse.”¹⁷⁰ As can be seen from Augustine’s writings, he is anti-Jewish, and circumcision, the Sabbath, and dietary laws are considered to be Jewish. Cyril of Jerusalem (313 – 386 AD) even advises believers to “stand aloof from all observance of Sabbaths, and from calling any indifferent meats common or unclean”¹⁷¹ along with the warning to avoid the Jewish sect. Why? “This Holy Spirit. . . . has set us free from the burdens of the law grievous to be borne —those I mean, concerning things common and unclean, and meats”¹⁷² he says.

¹⁶⁸ Augustin *Reply to Faustus the Manichaeon* 6.7 (NPNF1, 4:171, trans. Stothert).

¹⁶⁹ Augustin *Reply to Faustus the Manichaeon* 10.2 (NPNF1, 4:177, trans. Stothert).

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 240.

¹⁷¹ Cyril *Catechetical Lectures* 4.37 (NPNF2, 7:28, trans. Fremantle).

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 131.

The positions of each party are highlighted in the dispute between Faustus and Augustine. Faustus attempts to convince Augustine to “acknowledge that Moses and the prophets taught doctrines of devils, and were the interpreters of a lying and malignant spirit; since they enjoin with great emphasis abstinence from swine’s flesh and other meats, which they call unclean”¹⁷³ in order to accuse Augustine of violating the dietary laws because he does not believe it originates with God. The ones mentioned by Faustus are part of the dietary laws, and while Augustine did not believe Moses said such things, he does offer an interpretation of the dietary laws’ precepts. There are two issues at stake here: a) Faustus rejects Augustine’s allegorical interpretation of the dietary law; b) Augustine believes that by teaching abstinence from meat, Faustus practices devilish teaching. A middle position, such as the literal dietary law, appears to have been difficult to accept for both camps, each of which used the law to justify their own position.

However, it appears that some Christians followed a slightly different lifestyle than Augustine, and they were also appreciated: “Again, what are we to think of you, or of the better class of Christians among you, some of whom abstain from swine’s flesh, some from the flesh of quadrupeds, and some from all animal food, while all the Church admires them for it, and regards them with profound veneration.”¹⁷⁴ What we do not know is whether any of them were supporters of Faustus, but it is clear from Faustus’ arguments that at the very least the final category of Christians – those who abstain from all animal food – were.

To all these arguments Augustine responds, “Those things in the Old Testament which we do not observe we hold to have been suitable appointments for

¹⁷³ *Augustin Reply to Faustus the Manichaeon* 30.1-3 (NPNF1, 4:328, trans. Stothert).

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

the time and the people of that dispensation, besides being symbolical to us of truths in which they have still a spiritual use, though the outward observance is abolished; and this opinion is proved to be the doctrine of the apostolic writings.”¹⁷⁵ No room for interpretation exists. No matter how persuasive Faustus was, he could not change Augustine’s mind because this was the ideology that had existed since Irenaeus’ time. Furthermore, Basil of Caesarea (330 – 379 AD) believes that “it has seemed to me ridiculous that any one should make a vow to abstain from swine’s flesh”¹⁷⁶ and that the thing to beware of is not the unclean flesh, but the oath. He shares Augustine’s ideology and concludes that “the abstinence is unnecessary.”¹⁷⁷

Jerome poses a rhetorical question: “what is the use of swine if we may not eat their flesh? If they are not eaten, all these creatures were created by God for nothing”¹⁷⁸ he continues, “Granted, he says, that the ox was created for ploughing, the horse for riding, the dog for watching, goats for their milk, sheep for their fleeces.”¹⁷⁹ Thus, God endows man with liberty and indulgence. What then is the significance of the dietary law? As with the other ANF and NPNF, Jerome places the dietary laws in an allegoric context. Jerome says,

No universal law of nature regulates the food of all nations, and each eats those things of which it has abundance. For instance, the Arabians and Saracens, and all the wild tribes of the desert live on camel’s milk and flesh: for the camel, to suit the climate and barren soil of those regions, is easily bred and reared. They think it wicked to eat the flesh of swine. Why? Because pigs which fatten on acorns, chestnuts, roots of ferns, and barley, are seldom or never found among them: and if they were found, they would not afford the nourishment of which we spoke just now. The exact opposite is the case with the northern peoples. If

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 334-5.

¹⁷⁶ Basil *Letters* 199.28 (NPNF2, 8:238, trans. Jackson).

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁸ Jerome *Against Jovinianus* 2.5 (NPNF2, 6:391-2, trans. Fremantle).

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

you were to force them to eat the flesh of asses and camels, they would think it the same as though they were compelled to devour a wolf or a crow.¹⁸⁰

And he continues that “in Pontus and Phrygia a paterfamilias pays a good price for fat white worms with blackish heads,”¹⁸¹ and “the peoples of the East and of Libya feed on locusts”¹⁸² but if you ask a Phrygian to eat locust “he will think it scandalous.”¹⁸³

Jerome’s arguments are the most compelling because they involve an impossibility. If this is God’s command, it cannot be the same for all of the earth’s peoples. Is God aware of each people’s cultural context? Yes, according to Jerome! To begin, there are some doubts because God gave his commandments to man and then chose a nation to carry on God’s knowledge – in OT, this is the people of Israel; in NT, this is the Christians. Second, there are people in the Old Testament who are not Israelites but worship the God of Israel and literally follow the commandments. Even so, if we employ allegorical ideology, Jerome’s argument is not invalid, as it is capable of spiritually upholding the dietary laws.

According to the Church Fathers, the following is the meaning of the distinguishing characteristics of the animals under dietary law:

The symbol	Irenaeus	Clement of Alexandria	Novatian	Augustin
The cloven hoof	“Make their way by faith steadily towards	“Indicates the equilibrium of righteousness” ¹⁸⁵	“Tread the ways of	It is not specified

¹⁸⁰ Jerome *Against Jovinianus* 2.7 (NPNF2, 6:393, trans. Fremantle).

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ Clement of Alexandria *The Instructor* 3.11 (ANF, 2:289, trans. Roberts and Donaldson).

	the Father and the Son” ¹⁸⁴		righteousness” ¹⁸⁶	
The rumination	“Meditate day and night upon the words of God” ¹⁸⁷	“Those who study the oracles of God night and day” ¹⁸⁸	“Have in their mouth as food the divine precepts” ¹⁸⁹	“They gladly hear the words of wisdom and reflect on them afterwards” ¹⁹⁰
Having cloven hoof and chewing the cud – the interpretation	The Christians	The Christians	The Christians	It is not specified
Chew the cud but does not have cloven hooves	“An unstable generation - who have the words of God in their mouth, but do not fix their rooted steadfastness in the Father and in the Son” ¹⁹¹	“Who have indeed the oracles of God, but have not faith, and the step which, resting on the truth, conveys to the Father by the Son” ¹⁹²	“Digest the food of the divine precepts, but do not walk firm in virtues” ¹⁹³	It is not specified
Having cloven hooves, but does not chew the cud	“An indication of all heretics, and of those who do not meditate on the words of God, neither are adorned with works of righteousness” ¹⁹⁴	“The heretics, who indeed go upon the name of the Father and the Son, but are incapable of triturating and grinding down the clear declaration of the oracles, and	The heretics	“Though they gladly hear the words of wisdom, they never reflect on them

¹⁸⁴ Irenaeus *Against Heresies* 5.8.4 (ANF, 1:534, trans. Roberts and Donaldson).

¹⁸⁶ Novatian *On the Jewish Meats* 3 (ANF, 5:646-8, trans. Roberts and Donaldson).

¹⁸⁷ Irenaeus *Against Heresies* 5.8.4.

¹⁸⁸ Clement of Alexandria *The Stromata* 7.18 (ANF, 2:555, trans. Roberts and Donaldson).

¹⁸⁹ Novatian *On the Jewish Meats* 3 (ANF, 5:646-8, trans. Roberts and Donaldson).

¹⁹⁰ Augustin *Reply to Faustus the Manichaeon* 6.7 (NPNF1, 4:171, trans. Stothert).

¹⁹¹ Irenaeus *Against Heresies* 5.8.4.

¹⁹² Clement of Alexandria *The Stromata* 7.18 (ANF, 2:555, trans. Roberts and Donaldson).

¹⁹³ Novatian *On the Jewish Meats* 3 (ANF, 5:647, trans. Roberts and Donaldson).

¹⁹⁴ Irenaeus *Against Heresies* 5.8.4.

		who, besides, perform the works of righteousness coarsely and not with precision” ¹⁹⁵		afterwards” ¹⁹⁶
Does not have cloven hooves neither chew the cud	“The gentiles who have neither faith in God, nor do meditate on His words” ¹⁹⁷	It is not specified	The gentiles	It is not specified

Both the ANF and the NPNF interpret dietary laws allegorically. Thus, an explanation is sought to enable believers to comprehend what God or Moses intended to communicate through the dietary law. The ANF provides a more comprehensive definition of unclean animals. For instance:

- Pigs and dogs, according to Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria, symbolize people who are not adorned with good deeds and who do not meditate on God’s Word; people who are greedy, excessive, and led by worldly lusts,¹⁹⁸ “delight in corporeal pleasures, in impure food, and in itching with filthy pruriency after the mischievous delights of lewdness.”¹⁹⁹ “For the sow is the emblem of voluptuous and unclean lust of food, and lecherous and filthy licentiousness in venery, always prurient, and material, and lying in the mire, and fattening for slaughter and destruction.”²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁵ Clement of Alexandria *The Stromata* 7.18, 555-6.

¹⁹⁶ Augustin *Reply to Faustus the Manichaeon* 6.7, 171.

¹⁹⁷ Irenaeus *Against Heresies* 5.8.4.

¹⁹⁸ Clement of Alexandria *The Instructor* 2.1 (ANF, 2:239, trans. Roberts and Donaldson).

¹⁹⁹ Clement of Alexandria *The Instructor* 3.11 (ANF, 2:289, trans. Roberts and Donaldson).

²⁰⁰ Clement of Alexandria *The Stromata* 5.8 (ANF, 2:456, trans. Roberts and Donaldson).

- According to Novatian and Lactantius, the pig is unique because “this animal is filthy and unclean, and never looks up to heaven, delighting in the garbage of vice it is always the slave of its appetite and food, placing its supreme good not in generosity of mind, but in the flesh alone.”²⁰¹
- According to Clement of Alexandria, unclean birds are those who profit from rapine.
- According to Novatian, the fish are interpreted as follows: “the roughness of scales is regarded as constituting their cleanness; rough, and rugged, and unpolished, and substantial, and grave manners are approved in men; while those that are without scales are unclean; because trifling, and fickle, and faithless, and effeminate manners are disapproved.”²⁰²
- The camel, which ruminates but lacks the cloven hoof, “it condemns a life nerveless and crooked with crimes.”²⁰³

²⁰¹ Novatian *On the Jewish Meats* 3 (ANF, 5:647, trans. Roberts and Donaldson).

²⁰² Novatian *On the Jewish Meats* 3 (ANF, 5:647, trans. Roberts and Donaldson).

²⁰³ *Ibid.*

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

Although the Maccabees' writings are considered to be, most of them, in Hebrew, the Maccabees' books 1, 2, and 4 were not included in Tanakh because they were written after the first century AD.

Antiochus Epiphanes issues a decree in 1 Maccabees requesting the renunciation of circumcision and granting the right to consume pork. Following this decree, several Jews stated that they would rather die than abandon the divine laws. However, not all Jews maintained this position; a minority preferred universalism and thus violated God's law. As a result of this group, persecution was intensified against those who were exclusive and refused to accept the Jews' homogenization with pagan peoples.

In 2 Maccabees, the Jews of Israel write to the Egyptian Jews inviting them to celebrate Hanukkah. We are told two stories in this book that involve persecution and martyrdom: the first is about Eleazar, and the second is about his mother and seven sons. These people believed that faith and the Law were more important than their own lives, and their actions demonstrate that regardless of the size of the trial, you must not yield, but must resist it to the death, if necessary. If the king forces Eleazar to eat in chapter 6 and forces him to touch the pork, in chapter 7, the seven sons not only refuse to eat, but even touch the pork.

4 Maccabees is a sequel to 2 Maccabees, it continues and expands the stories. The purpose of this book is to instill in Jews a sense of religious loyalty. Eleazar, as a model for the assembled, resists King Antiochus' desire to consume pork, but he does not even simulate this attitude, fearful of misleading his fellow countrymen. Antiochus Epiphanes employs two arguments to persuade Eleazar to submit to his influence and claims: a) The first is that Eleazar should follow natural laws; that is, the pig is also a natural gift and must be consumed. According to this argument, eating pork is an innocent pleasure, and rejecting nature's gifts is irrational and unjust; b) The second argument is that divinity supervises human behavior – a concept found in Greek philosophy and Judaism. According to this theory, violating God's law under duress does not constitute sin and does not result in divine punishment, but Eleazar's response contains no hint of concession: "no constraint is greater than obedience to God's Law." None of these arguments convinced Eleazar to surrender, but then again, neither did the other Jewish believers who preferred martyrdom to breaking God's Law.

Each of these books demonstrates how obedience to the dietary laws is more important than persecution and even death. Indeed, living in violation of God's Law entailed death, even if it was not physical. Eleazar affirms and defends the Law's validity, necessity, and supremacy, and together with her seven sons, they have demonstrated that love for God is greater than anything else.

We can only conclude from the textual evidence in LA that the author gave an allegorical interpretation to the dietary law. In this way, he demonstrates that God intended for the people to interpret it allegorically. LA refers to the way God intended his people to be: a) not to rely on their own strength, but on God's; b) not to oppress

anyone and to work godly; c) to pursue moral integrity and righteousness as an end; d) to be wise and responsible people; e) not to be evil or gossip.

LA regards the dietary laws as valid, but not literally. The words with which he concludes the pericope sent to Philocrates shed light on the author of LA's mindset - the Law's characteristic outlook.

The Essene Gospel of Peace is the only writing I've come across that advocates for the abolition of Mosaic law. It argues that Moses instituted the prohibition on certain animals as a means of enforcing the Ten Commandments, the only ones given by God. Even if the prohibition law is a human invention, the EGP does not promote the consumption of unclean animals. Additionally, EGP promotes vegetarianism. Not only should unclean animals not be consumed in this context, but neither should clean animals.

While Gad's testament strengthens the Mosaic dietary laws, Asher's testament makes a stronger case for maintaining this distinction. Unlike the EGP, Asher's testament states that God gave the laws, including the dietary laws, and this argument is also supported by Scripture. Keeping the dietary laws, according to this argument, entails listening to God.

Barnabas takes a radically anti-Jewish stance in his interpretation of the Old Testament, which is unprecedented in early Christian literature. In a sustained attack on Judaism, the author declares that the Mosaic law, including animal sacrifices, are errors resulting from the Jews' blindness and reliance on an "evil angel" (Barn 9:4). Based on an allegorical interpretation of the OT, including the dietary laws, it imparts a meaning that is diametrically opposed to the original authors' intention.

The author attempts to demonstrate that only Christians comprehend the true meaning of the Scriptures (Barn 10:12) and are thus God's true and intended covenant

heirs. As we noted in previous chapters, several texts from Barn 10 appear to have no textual connection to the remainder of the chapter, leading us to believe that these verses were added later. The author weaves a tense allegory throughout the Epistle, occasionally drawing on myths and biological statements.

The author, who remained anonymous, was an excellent connoisseur of OT, which he interprets allegorically, spiritually, and creatively. The author spiritualizes dietary laws by stating that unclean animals symbolize various types of behaviors that a Christian should abstain from. While there is an analogy — Christians acting like pigs — the analogy does not demonstrate that God does not want His people to take the commandments literally.

On the one hand, while Barnabas appears to support the abolition of the dietary laws, there is insufficient evidence to conclude that he believed this law to be human, that is, given by Moses, but claims that it is divine, but misinterpreted. While this may be true when viewed through the allegorical lens, God's command was most literally offered. Additionally, the Mosaic law is not abolished in Barn, but a new interpretation is offered.

On the other hand, even though Barn does not advocate the abolition of the Mosaic law, we believe it is necessary to address allegory situations found in the Bible in order to discern the difference in usage between biblical allegory and the allegory found in the Epistle of Barnabas. We discovered that the allegory in the OT represents the character of various individuals, particularly the patriarchs, but the same is true in the NT. While it is obvious that we can draw numerous spiritual lessons from these allegories, when we examine the corresponding biblical accounts, we discover that those allegories were not given much weight and were instead taken literally. That is, the positive or negative aspects of the aforementioned animals were

extracted and transposed onto the aforementioned individuals, and the allegorical level ended here.

After examining all non-canonical writings, I concluded that only a few writings make reference to clean/unclean animals in relation to their consumption. The authors of the writings bolstered the biblical accounts, not because they lacked sufficient evidence, but because the authors of the non-canonical writings also adhered to the dietary law, with the sole exception of Barn, which attempted to promote allegory in the dietary law.

A position similar to that expressed in Barn is found in Church Fathers. Their writings demonstrate the evolution of allegory and interpretation, arguing that the dietary laws are a uniquely Jewish element that should no longer be applied literally to Christians. The writers of ANF and NPNF who make reference to the dietary laws do so to emphasize its derogation or to emphasize the importance of spiritualization and defining elements.

According to the Church Fathers' allegory, we have the following: a) Having the cloven hoof and ruminating refers to true Christians who have faith based on the Father and the Son, who are steadfast in their faith, who do not waver, and who study, meditate, and apply on a practical level the things revealed in the Bible daily; b) Chewing the cud but not having cloven hooves refers to Jews who have divine teachings and "live according to the Scriptures but do not believe in Jesus Christ,"²⁰⁴ c) "Having cloven hooves, but does not chew the cud refers to the heretics,"²⁰⁵ who

²⁰⁴ Jiří Moskala, "The Laws of Clean and Unclean Animals of Leviticus 11: their Nature, Theology, and Rationale (an Intertextual Study)," 28. He writes that for Philo of Alexandria "chewing the cud represents the long difficult process of learning until the man impresses the image of it all firmly on his soul."

²⁰⁵ Irenaeus *Against Heresies* 5.8.4.

have “faith/believe in the Father and the Son,”²⁰⁶ but who do not meditate on God’s words from the Bible and does not perform the works of righteousness; d) Does not have cloven hooves neither chew the cud refers to the pagans/gentiles “who have neither faith in God, nor do meditate on His words.”²⁰⁷

The Church Fathers support the hypothesis that the Jews misunderstood God’s true intention with regard to the dietary laws and that it was erroneous to observe it literally. Furthermore, it is not right to refer to something created by God as unclean—as the Church Fathers argue. On the one hand, their argument is founded on the authority of taste to establish God’s presence – the same argument as Antiochus Epiphanes’. However, if God did not intend for the pig to be eaten, why did He create it? According to the Church Fathers, the pig was created in vain if God did not intend for us to eat it, because all other unclean animals are useful, but the pig cannot be used for anything other than eating. If this hypothesis is correct, several questions must be addressed. For instance, what is necessary to man the hare, the alligator, the hippo, and so forth? We will never have all the answers, no matter how hard we try.

The ANF, like the NPNF, does not abolish dietary law; rather, it is interpreted allegorically. Thus, an explanation is sought to enable believers to comprehend what God or Moses intended to communicate through dietary law. Jerome takes allegorical argumentation a step further by arguing that it is absurd to regard the dietary law as a universal law. However, according to Reply to Faustus the Manichaeon, there were Christians during the ANF and NPNF who literally followed the dietary laws, but were labeled heretics by the Church Fathers because the Church Fathers associated this law with Judaism.

²⁰⁶ Acc Clement of Alexandria *The Stromata* 5.8 (ANF, 2:456, trans. Roberts and Donaldson).

²⁰⁷ Irenaeus *Against Heresies* 5.8.4 (ANF, 1:534, trans. Roberts and Donaldson).

The arguments used by the Church Fathers have greatly influenced Christians even to this day, and the understandings of most theologians regarding the dietary laws are subject to the theology of the Church Fathers. However, a clear understanding of this subject – of the dietary laws – requires a review of the main texts of Scripture.

As previously stated, no non-canonical writing – whether deuterocanonical or pseudepigraphal – claims to abolish the dietary law. With regard to the deuterocanonical writings, their authors sought to promote not only the distinction between clean and unclean, but also to bolster the practice of the dietary law. Opinions on pseudepigraphal writings are divided. The dietary laws are not abolished in Barn – it is recognized as valid – but it is claimed that it was misunderstood and that the law did not refer to the consumption of literal animals but to the avoidance of people who behave like unclean animals – a position shared by the Church Fathers. By adopting a vegetarian diet, EGP adheres to and strengthens the dietary law. Thus, what we have in Leviticus 11 is merely the beginning and a jumping-off point for a godly and faithful life. TP refers to clean and unclean animals, recognizing the distinction that must be made between the two, but also recognizing and strengthening the dietary law.

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