

**GOSPEL HIGHWAY**  
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**2007/3 Year Of The Boar  
or Food: Clean & Unclean**  
(A Tract For The Chinese New Year)

by B. S. Poh

The boar is the last of the twelve animals in the Chinese zodiac. The wild boar is one majestic and powerful animal which can stand its own against other animals in the jungle. The meat of the domesticated pig is relished by numberless people throughout the world. However, Muslims and Jews regard the pig as religiously unclean.

What has the Bible to say about food - whether clean or unclean? Before the coming of Jesus Christ to the world, the pig was one of the ceremonially unclean animals, whose meat may not be eaten by God's people. Meats were classified as clean or unclean in order to teach the truth that there is such a thing as right and wrong, righteousness and immorality, purity and sin. The lesson is that the holy and just God can accept only those who are spiritually clean. But alas, none of us is spiritually clean for we all live unrighteously before God - breaking His law in our thoughts, words, and deeds. Try as hard as we might, we are unable to do anything righteous in God's sight. "There is none righteous, no, not one."<sup>1</sup>

***Human sin***

What accounts for our inability to do anything righteous? It is our sinful nature, which has been inherited from our parents, who inherited it down the centuries from the very first pair of humans - Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve were created sinless, and given every good thing to enjoy on the earth. They were forbidden only to eat from one of the many trees. Under Satan's instigation, they both were tempted and disobeyed God. For this act of rebellion against the Creator, they were punished with death - both physical death, which is the separation of the soul from the body, and spiritual death, which is eternal separation from God. Adam was made by God to be the representative head of the human race. His sin is our sin, his guilt our guilt. Death came into the world through Adam. We have inherited his sinful nature.

It is this sinful nature that inclines us toward sinful actions, and which taints all our otherwise good deeds with sin. Jesus Christ taught this truth, saying, "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man."<sup>2</sup> The prophet Isaiah realised this truth when he said, "Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips."<sup>3</sup> The disciple Peter was deeply convicted of his own sin when he said to Jesus, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"<sup>4</sup> The apostle Paul expressed the same truth when he said, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."<sup>5</sup>

***Jesus Christ, Saviour of the world***

How does Jesus Christ save people from sin? He is the eternal Son of God who came to this world to take upon Himself perfect human nature. As the God-Man, He laid down His life as the perfect sacrifice to pay for the sin of His people. When He died on the cross, He was actually bearing the punishment of believers for their sins against God. His blood was shed for the cleansing of their sins. The animal sacrifices offered up in the temple of Jerusalem in the past pointed to the coming of Jesus Christ who is "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"<sup>6</sup> On the third day of His

death, Jesus rose from the dead and was seen by over 500 people at different times. He was then taken into heaven, promising to return to judge the world.

Now that the Saviour of the world has come and accomplished the salvation of His people, Christians do not regard any food as ceremonially clean or unclean. What matters is the cleansing of our sins by the blood of the Lamb of God. That happens when sinners turn to Jesus Christ in faith, trusting Him as the Saviour, whose death on the cross was the all-sufficient payment for sins. When you repent of your sins and trust in Jesus Christ for salvation, the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in you, transforming your nature and giving you the ability to obey God's word in the Bible.

It is far better to be spiritually clean before God, than to be too concerned about food - whether clean or unclean. Spiritual cleansing comes by God's grace, through faith, in Jesus Christ alone. Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Rom. 3:10; <sup>2</sup>Mk. 7:22-23; <sup>3</sup>Isa. 6:5; <sup>4</sup>Lk. 5:8; <sup>5</sup>1 Tim. 1:15; <sup>6</sup>Jn. 1:29; <sup>7</sup>Heb. 9:22; Col. 1:14

