

## *“Thus He Declared All Foods Clean”*

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Read Mark 7:1-23

Remember to whom Mark writes. He is writing to a Roman audience, a Gentile audience. He is showing how they are included in the redemptive purpose of God to secure for Himself a people who will love Him and worship Him forever. It is these people who will enjoy the presence of God forever. Although this truth caused the religious establishment to put Him to death, it caused the larger world to rejoice.

In the purpose of God for the redemption of His people, worshippers from every tongue, tribe, people, and nation were intentionally included. Many within the Jewish religion excluded Gentiles from a redemptive hope. Jesus forcefully shows how Gentiles were a part of God’s plan all along.

The same tension continued to exist with Peter and Cornelius in Acts 10. In Acts 10 we have the vision to Peter declaring that all foods are clean (10:1-23). The Holy Spirit then falls on the Gentiles, just as He did in Acts 2 (10:23-48). Peter defends Gentile inclusion (11:1-18) and the church in Antioch grows strong in the Spirit (11:19-30).

<sup>34</sup> “Opening his mouth, Peter said: ‘I most certainly understand now that **God is not one to show partiality,** <sup>35</sup> **but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him.** <sup>36</sup> The word which He sent to the sons of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all)... <sup>39</sup> We are witnesses of all the things He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They also put Him to death by hanging Him on a cross. <sup>40</sup> God raised Him up on the third day and granted that He become visible,... <sup>42</sup> And He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead. <sup>43</sup> **Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins**” (Acts 10:34-36, 39, 40, 42, 43).

The early church continued to wrestle with this idea in the book of Galatians and then at the church council of Acts 15. Yet, it is clear from Mark 7:1-23 that Jesus removed any man made barriers and wrong conclusions concerning the dietary laws of the nation of Israel.

The New Testament openly testifies to the inclusion of people from every tongue, tribe, people, and nation. Salvation is not defined by ethnicity. Among the people of God, there are no privileged people groups. God has made from both Jew and Gentile one new man (Eph. 2:15). May God cause us to see the largeness to His redemptive purpose, and may we see this both locally, nationally, and globally as we continue to become a church planting church.