Biblical Background: The Law of Clean and Unclean Animals

In Leviticus 11, God gave the Israelites specific dietary laws distinguishing clean from unclean animals. These laws were part of the Mosaic Covenant, meant to set Israel apart as a holy people devoted to the Lord (cf.

> Leviticus 11:44–45, *ESV:* “For I am the LORD your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy…”*).*

Leviticus 11:29–31 (ESV):

> *“And these are unclean to you among the swarming things that swarm on the ground: the mole rat, the mouse, the great lizard of any kind,*
> *the gecko, the monitor lizard, the lizard, the sand lizard, and the chameleon.*
> *These are unclean to you among all that swarm. Whoever touches them when they are dead shall be unclean until the*

> *evening.”*

In this passage, gecko-like creatures are lizards that dwell in trees, while sand lizard refers to rock-dwelling or ground lizards, such as agamas or skinks. Both were considered ceremonially unclean in ancient Israel.

Why Were These Animals Declared Unclean?

The classification was not based on nutritional or toxicological concerns. Rather, it reflected symbolic and spiritual principles:

- Moral symbolism: Many scholars interpret unclean animals as representing spiritual impurity or moral corruption. These animals often had characteristics (e.g., scavenging, creeping, hiding) associated with deceit, idolatry, or spiritual uncleanness (cf. *Isaiah 65:4*, *Revelation 18:2*).
- Holiness separation: The dietary laws helped Israel remain distinct from surrounding pagan nations, who often included such creatures in rituals or diets.

New Covenant Understanding: Freedom in Christ

With the coming of Christ and the establishment of the New Covenant, the ceremonial laws including dietary restrictions were

fulfilled in Him.

Mark 7:18–19 (NIV):

> *“‘Don’t you see that nothing that enters a person from the outside can defile them? For it doesn’t go into their heart but into their stomach, and then out of the body.’ (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods clean.)”*

Acts 10:13–15 (ESV):

> *“And there came a voice to him: ‘Rise, Peter; kill and eat.’ But Peter said, ‘By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.’*
> *And the voice came to him again a second time, ‘What God has made clean, do not call common.’”*

These passages show that dietary restrictions no longer apply to believers in Christ. What matters now is the spiritual condition of the heart, not the external observance of ceremonial laws.

Christian Liberty and Personal Discernment

Even though eating animals like gecko and sand lizard is now biblically permissible, the New Testament emphasizes wisdom, love, and sensitivity to others when exercising our freedom.

1 Corinthians 10:23 (NIV):

> *“‘I have the right to do anything,’ you say but not everything is beneficial. ‘I have the right to do anything’ but not everything is constructive.”*

If certain foods are culturally unacceptable, repulsive, or a stumbling block to others, it is perfectly acceptable and wise not to eat them. However, choosing not to eat them does not make one more righteous, nor does eating them defile a believer in Christ.

Gecko and sand lizard Today

Biblically, gecko and sand lizard are no longer considered unclean under the New Covenant. While they may not be widely accepted as food in many cultures, consuming them is not sinful. Believers are called to exercise their freedom in Christ responsibly, always guided by love, wisdom, and holiness.

Maranatha *“The Lord is coming.”* (1 Corinthians 16:22)

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