

How are Christians to regard Halal Certification?

By Vicar Jake Zabel

In modern day Australia, many may be asking the question “how are Christians to regard Halal Certification?”

Halal Certification of foods in Australia is done by some (not all) companies to show their support for the religion of Islam (least they appear to be Islamophobic). In fact, many Australians will go out of their way to buy and eat Halal certified food to show their support, acceptance and “tolerance” for Islam.

So how are Christians to regard this? Well, Scripture provides us with an excellent case study and precedent for this incident. From chapters 8-10 of Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians, St. Paul answers the question of food sacrificed to idols (hereafter idol-food).

Paul made a number of comments regarding the case of Christians eating idol-food:

1. Idols are nothing, thus there is nothing intrinsically wrong with the food. (8:4) The Earth is the Lord’s and all of its fullness, whatever you eat belongs to God and not to idols. (10:26)
2. Food does not commend us to God and whether we eat or not, we are no better and no worse, thus eating idol-food is an adiaphora, and Christians are lawful to eat it. (8:8)
3. All things are lawful to me, but not all things are helpful, all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify. (10:23) Christians are free to eat the food, however, just because we are free to do something does mean that thing is helpful and edifying.
4. The things that are sacrificed by the Gentiles to idols they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and Paul does not want us to have fellowship with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord’s table and the table of demons. (10:20-21) My eating idol-food it gives the appearance that Christians are having fellowship with those idols (and thus demons).
5. Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? (10:22). Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. (10:31) We are to give glory to God alone and not to idols or false gods.
6. Let no one seek his own, but the welling being of others. (10:24) Seek not your own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved. (10:33) We are not to be concerned with our own freedom or advantage but about the wellbeing and salvation of others.
7. If food makes my brother stumble, I will never eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble. (8:13) We should not eat idol-food if it will cause a brother to stumble in the faith.
8. Eat whatever is sold in the meat-market, and ask no questions. (10:25) If your host offers you food eat whatever is set before you without asking any questions. (10:27)
9. If anyone says to you, “this was offered to idols” do not eat it for the sake of conscience. Not your own by the conscience of others. (10:28-29) You should not knowingly eat idol-food, least you cause your brother to stumble in the faith.
10. Give no offense, either to Jews, or to Greeks or to the Church of God. (10:32) You should not knowingly eat idol-food, least you give offense to unbelievers and turn them away from God, or give offense to fellow believers and cause them to stumble in their faith.

All foods are clean (Mark 7:19, Acts 10:15) and is not unclean in and of itself (Rom. 14:14). Thus all Christians are free to eat idol-meat. However, not everything we do is helpful and edifying and may cause our brother to stumble in the faith. We should not insist on our own freedom and be should not put our liberty above that of another’s salvation. We should not cause those who seek the Lord to become confounded (Psalm 69:6).

In regards to Halal certified food many companies will seek Halal Certification to show their support of Islam. Therefore, but knowingly eating of Halal certified food Christians may give the appearance of supporting Islam.

Islam is a violent religion that harms not only the body through violent attacks, but also the soul by leading people astray by false doctrines. Therefore, Christians are to oppose Islam, its violent ways and its false teachings.

Christians are free to eat Halal certified food, which is in and of itself clean. Therefore, if you buy products from the shops, buy them without asking questions, and if you are offered food from a host, eat whatever is set before you without asking questions.

However, if someone informs you and says, “that is Halal certified,” refrain from eating it.

A Christian can lawfully eat Halal certified food, but just because something is lawful doesn't mean it is helpful or edifying.

By knowingly eating something that is Halal certified you give the outward appearances of supporting Islam, and you cannot partake of the Lord's table and the table of Allah.

For the sake of conscience do not eat the food. When I say “conscience”, I do not mean your own but the conscience of others.

If eating Halal certified food will cause others to stumble then refrain, seek not all your own freedom or profit, instead seek the profit of others, that they may be saved.

Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.