

Diet and Health in the Bible

compiled by Rachel Cory-Kuehl, 207

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Scripture quoted from the NKJV unless otherwise noted.

THE ORIGINAL DIET

Genesis 1:29 “And God said, ‘See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food.’”

The following is an explanation of Genesis 1:29, given according to foods as we know them today.

EVERY HERB BEARING SEED

(a seed plant which does not develop woody persistent tissue)

GRAINS - wheat, corn, rye, barley, rice, oats, millet, etc.

SEEDS - sunflower, sesame, flax, pumpkin seeds, etc.

LEGUMES - soybeans, lentils, peas, peanuts, other beans, etc.

SUCCULENT FOODS CONTAINING SEEDS - eggplant, okra, bell peppers, squash, green beans, pumpkins, cucumbers, tomatoes, melons, etc.

EVERY TREE, in the which is THE FRUIT OF A TREE YIELDING SEED (a woody perennial plant, shrub, or bush).

FRUITS - citrus fruits, sweet fruits, palm fruits, etc.

NUTS - almonds, pecans, cashews, brazil, walnuts, etc.

THE DIET OF THE ANIMALS

Genesis 1:30 “Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life, I have given every green herb for food; and it was so.”

Notice: The cat kind, and the dog kind ate plant food. There were no carnivores in the Garden of Eden. They did not transition to a diet of flesh meat until after the Fall, most probably after the Flood of Noah. In the coming Kingdom of Messiah, “the bear and the lamb will graze together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox” (Isa 11:7, Isa 65:25).

AFTER THE FALL

After Adam and Eve sinned, they were expelled from the Garden of Eden, and no longer had access to the wonderful Tree of Life. They would still eat a vegan diet, but they would have to work for it. The “herb of the field” was added, which before had been only food for animals.

Genesis 3:17 “To Adam he said, ‘Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, “You must not eat from it,”

Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. 18 It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. 19 By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.” (NIV)

HERBS (vegetables):

Leaf: lettuce, brussels sprouts, cabbage, collard, etc

Flower: globe artichoke, broccoli, cauliflower.

Root: carrots, beets, potatoes, turnips, etc.

FLESH for FOOD

After the flood of Noah, the earth's soil and climate were dramatically altered. In many places on earth it would not be possible to obtain enough food from plant sources during all times of the year. It was at this time that God gave man permission to eat animal flesh. Yet even in this God gave instruction that the blood must be drained from the carcass before eating, and man could eat only the flesh of animals called “clean” by God.

Genesis 9:3 “Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs. But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood.”

At the time of the flood, Noah was instructed to take “seven each of every **clean** animal, a male and his female; two each of **animals that are unclean**, a male and his female” (Genesis 7:2-3). Later God gave instruction to Moses and Aaron giving permission to eat the flesh of clean animals, but not that of unclean. And once again, the eating of blood was prohibited.

Leviticus 11:1-30 "And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying to them, 'Speak to the children of Israel, saying,'These are the animals which you may eat among all the beasts that are on the earth:

Among the beasts (*mammals*), whatever divides the hoof, having cloven hooves and chewing the cud that you may eat.

Nevertheless these you shall not eat among those that chew the cud or those that have cloven hooves:"

The meat of camel, rock hyrax, rabbit and pig, were called by the LORD, "unclean" for food, either because the animal does not "chew the cud" or because it does not have "cloven hooves."

Verse 27: All animals with "paws" are "unclean" for food, and should NOT be eaten.

Verse 8: Their flesh you shall not eat, and their carcasses you shall not touch. They are unclean to you (*Isa. 66:17*).

Verse 9-12: [FISH] These you may eat of all that are in the water: whatever in the water has fins and scales, whether in the seas or in the rivers that you may eat.

But all in the seas or in the rivers that do not have fins and scales, all that move in the water or any living thing which is in the water, they are an abomination to you. They shall be an abomination to you; you shall not eat their flesh, but you shall regard their carcasses as an abomination. Whatever in the water does not have fins or scales - that shall be an abomination to you.

This passage clearly excludes "seafood." The "unclean" list would include oysters, shrimp, clams, lobster, turtle, catfish, octopus, shark, whale, and seal. "Bottom feeders" and carnivores are NOT fit food for humans.

Verse 13-19: [FOWL] "And these you shall regard as an abomination among the birds; they shall not be eaten, they are an abomination:

the eagle, the vulture, the buzzard, the kite, and the falcon after its kind; every raven after its kind, the ostrich, the short-eared owl, the sea gull, and the hawk after its kind; the little owl, the fisher owl, and the screech owl; the white owl, the jackdaw, and the carrion vulture; the stork, the heron after its kind, the hoopoe, and the bat."

Verse 22: [INSECTS] "Specifically, of these you may eat the various kinds of locusts, grasshoppers, katydids and crickets. 23 But other than that, all winged swarming creatures having four feet are a detestable thing for you." (CJB)

Verse 27: [RODENTS and REPTILES] “These also shall be unclean to you among the creeping things that creep on the earth: the mole, the mouse, and the large lizard after its kind; The gecko, the monitor lizard, the sand reptile, the sand lizard, and the chameleon.”

DEUTERONOMY 14:3-21 Clean and unclean animal foods are reviewed, with the addition of the deer, the gazelle, the roe deer, the wild goat, the mountain goat, the antelope, and the mountain sheep to the list of clean meat.

EAT NO ANIMAL FAT

LEVITICUS 7:23-24 "And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak to the children of Israel, saying: You shall not eat any fat, of ox or sheep or goat. And the fat of a beast that dies naturally, and the fat of what is torn by wild animals, may be used in any other way; but you shall by no means eat it.'"

EAT NO BLOOD

GENESIS 9:3 “. . . but you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood.”

LEVITICUS 7:26-27 ""Moreover you shall not eat any blood in any of your dwellings, whether of bird or beast. Whoever eats any blood, that person shall be cut off from his people.""

NOTE: Let me say here that I do believe in giving blood transfusions to someone who is going to die or be severely anemic without this life-saving measure. The command forbids the eating of meat with the blood, not saving lives with it. I have met too many people who would forbid a blood transfusion, but think nothing of eating a juicy steak.

DANIEL AND HIS COMPANIONS

REFUSED THE KINGS MEAT

DANIEL 1:8 (When Daniel and his three companions were carried to Babylon as captives) “But

Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, not with the wine which he drank."

The "kings meat" would have included unclean meats, flesh with the blood and fat, and also foods first offered to idols.

DANIEL 1:12 (They requested that they be allowed to eat vegetables and water for ten days.) "Please test you servants for ten days; and let them give us vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then let our countenances be examined before you, and the countenances of the young men who eat the portion of the king's delicacies; and as you see fit, so deal with your servants."

DANIEL 1:15 "And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared better and fatter in flesh than all the young men who ate the portion of the king's delicacies."

DANIEL 1:18-20 (At the end of the three year period during which they were to learn the Caldean language) "Now at the end of the days, when the king had said that they should be brought in, the chief of the eunuchs brought them in before nebuchadnezzar. Then the king interviewed them, and among them all none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; therefore they served before the king. And in all matters of wisdom and understanding about which the king examined them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers who were in all his realm."

"YOU ARE THE TEMPLE OF GOD"

I CORINTHIANS 10:31 "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."

I CORINTHIANS 3:16, 17 "Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?"

If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are."

I CORINTHIANS 6:19, 20 "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who

is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."

ALCOHOL

There are two kinds of wine spoken of in the Bible. One of these was the juice of the grape, and was pressed from the fruit into the cup as it was needed to drink (Genesis 40:11). It is this kind that is said to cheer God and man (Judges 9:13), and is dried up when the vine is destroyed (Joel 1:10-12). The other kind was that which had stood until it fermented, and alcohol had formed from the decaying substance.

Did not Paul recommend the use of wine under certain conditions?

"Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake, and thine often infirmities." I TIM 5:23

How is the first kind of wine spoken of?

"Butter of kine, and milk of sheep, with fat of lambs, and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats, with the fat of kidneys of wheat; and thou didst drink the PURE BLOOD OF THE GRAPE." DEUT. 32:14

How is the second kind of wine represented?

"Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder." PROV 23:31, 32

NOTE: That is, when it moves upright; as in the process of fermentation, it may be seen moving from the bottom upward. The original word here used aright- means something "upright."

It was Christ who, in the Old Testament, gave the warning to Israel, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." (Proverbs 20:1). I do not believe that Christ provided such a beverage. Fermentation is a symbol of decay, and of sin. How could something which is decaying represent the blood of the spotless Son of God?

Satan tempts men to indulgence that will cloud reason and numb spiritual perception, but Christ teaches us to bring the lower nature into subjection. His whole life was an example of self-denial. It was Christ who directed that John the Baptist drink neither wine nor strong drink (LUKE 1:15). It was He who enjoined similar abstinence upon the wife of Manoah (Judges 4:4).

PROVERBS. 23:29-32

Who hath woe?

who hath sorrow?

who hath contentions?

who hath babbling?

who hath wounds without cause?

Who hath redness of eyes?

They that tarry long at the wine;

They that go to seek mixed wine;

Look not thou upon the wine when it is red,

When it giveth his color in the cup,

When it moveth itself aright.

At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.

Where can we find a more vivid picture of the debasement and the slavery of the victim of alcohol. Even when awakened to a sense of his misery, he has no power to break from the snare; he "will seek it yet again."

(Proverbs 23:35)

ISAIAH 5:22 "Woe to men mighty at drinking wine, Woe to men valiant for mixing intoxicating

drink."

ISAIAH 28:1,2

Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim,

Whose glorious beauty is a fading flower

Which is at the head of the verdant valleys,

To those who are overcome with wine!

Behold, the Lord has a mighty and strong arm,

Like a tempest of hail and a destroying storm,

Like a flood of mighty waters overflowing,

Who will bring them down to the earth with His hand."

JUDGES 13:4 "Now therefore, please be careful not to drink wine or similar drink, and not to eat any unclean thing."

JUDGES 13:7 "And He said to me, 'Behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. Now drink no wine or similar drink, nor eat anything unclean,....' "

ISAIAH 24:9 "They shall not drink wine with a song; Strong drink is bitter to those who drink it."

ISAIAH 28:7 "But they also have erred through wine, And through intoxicating drink are out of the way; The priest and the prophet have erred through intoxicating drink, They are swallowed up by wine, They are out of the way through intoxicating drink; They err in vision, they stumble in judgment. For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, So that no place is clean."

HABAKKUK 2:15,16 "Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbor, Pressing him to your bottle, Even to make him drunk, That you may look on his nakedness! You are filled with shame instead of glory. You also - drink! And be exposed as uncircumcised! The cup of the Lord's right hand will

be turned against you, And utter shame will be on your glory.

Can a drunkard enter the kingdom of God?

"Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."

I CORINTHIANS 6:10.

How, then, should a Christian regard one who persists in drunkenness?

"But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard." I CORINTHIANS 5:11

DISEASES

III JOHN 2 "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper in health, even as thy soul prospereth."

EXODUS 15:26 "If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee."

This promise was given to the Israelites when Moses led them out of Egypt. God proceeded to give Moses a number of commandments, which form part of our Bible today. Because these divinely given medical directions were altogether different from those in the Papyrus Ebers (Egyptian royal court remedies). From the record we discover that Moses had so much faith in God's regulations that he did not incorporate a single current medical misconception into the inspired instructions.

Some rules of Sanitation found in the Bible:

LEVITICUS 13:46 "All the days wherein the plague shall be in him he shall be defiled; he is unclean: he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be."

Early in the Middle Ages the dreaded disease leprosy had killed countless millions of people; and later the Black Death took another sixty million. Not until the physicians of the day gave up leadership to the church was the plague brought under control. The church took as its guiding principle the concept of contagion as embodied in the Old Testament, Leviticus.

DEUTERONOMY 23:12,13 "You shall set off a place outside the camp and, when you go out; and you shall have an implement among your equipment, and when you sit down outside, you shall dig with it and turn and cover your refuse."

Up to the close of the eighteenth century, hygienic provisions, even in the great capitals, were quite primitive. It was the rule for excrement to be dumped into the streets which were unpaved and filthy. Powerful stenches gripped villages and cities. It was a heyday for flies as they bred in the filth and spread intestinal diseases that killed millions. Diseases such as cholera, dysentery, and typhoid fever could have easily been controlled by following God's provision in Deuteronomy. A medical historian writes that this directive is "certainly a primitive measure, but an effective one, which indicates advanced ideas of sanitation."

NUMBERS 19:11-22 "He who touches the dead body of anyone shall be unclean seven days. ... Whoever touches the body of anyone who has died, and does not purify himself, defiles the tabernacle of the Lord. That person shall be cut off from Israel. He shall be unclean, because the water of purification was not sprinkled on him; his uncleanness is still on him. ... The clean person shall sprinkle the unclean on the third day and on the seventh day he shall purify himself, wash his clothes, and bathe in water; and at evening he shall be clean..."

If physicians would have only followed the above instructions early in history many lives would have been saved. It was not until 1847, when Dr. Semmelweis wrote a book about handwashing and changing clothes after doing autopsies and surgeries before going to the next patient. When his rules were followed mortality dropped by 80 percent.

Many centuries before Semmelweis, however, God gave to Moses detailed instructions on the safest method for cleansing the hands after handling the infected living. Proper modern method for washing hands is "The hands should be vigorously lathered and rubbed together for at least 15 seconds under a moderate-sized stream of water..

The scriptural method specified not merely washing in a basin, but repeated washing in running water with time intervals allowed for drying and exposure to sun to kill bacteria not washed off. The soap used is even more remarkable. It was made by burning together in a fire the following: a young cow, cedar wood, hyssop branches, and scarlet wool. The washing solution contained an irritant, cedar-wood oil, that would encourage scrubbing; an antiseptic, hyssop oil, that would kill bacteria and fungi; and a scrubbing element, wool fibers, that would dislodge the bacteria. Even today, hospitals often use a similar granular soap because it is difficult to remove granular soap from the hands in less than 15 seconds.

How can circumcision of the male prevent cancer in women?

A number of studies have borne out the fact that freedom from cancer of the cervix was not due to factors such as race or food or environment, but wholly to circumcision.

If the tight, unretractable foreskin is not removed, proper cleansing can not be readily performed. As a result many virulent bacteria, including the cancer-producing *Smegma bacillus*, can grow profusely. During sexual intercourse these bacteria are deposited on the cervix of the uterus, but if the mucous membrane of the cervix is intact, little harm results. However, if lacerations exist, as they frequently do after childbirth, these bacteria can cause considerable irritation. Since any part of the body which is subjected to irritation is susceptible to cancer, it is perfectly understandable why cervical cancer is likely to develop in women whose mates are not circumcised. These bacteria not only produce cancer in women, but also irritate the male organ and may cause cancer of the penis. The extreme rarity of penile cancer in circumcised men is shown by the fact that in 1955 only the fourth case in medical history was reported. Thus we can say that circumcision is an almost perfect prophylaxis against this deadly cancer.

And to add to this protection from cervical injury, the Lord also commanded the people of Israel to not have sexual intercourse during a woman's monthly menses and right after childbirth. Both are times when the cervix is soft, open, and susceptible to injury and infections.

LEVITICUS 12:1-5 "Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying 'Speak to the children of Israel, saying If a woman has conceived, and borne a male child, then she shall be unclean seven days; as in the days of her customary impurity she shall be unclean. And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. She shall then continue in the blood of her purification thirty-three days.... But if she bears a female child, then she shall be unclean two weeks, as in her customary impurity, and she shall continue in the blood of her purification sixty-six days.'"

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“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding.

In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths.”

Proverbs 3:5-6

Follow God’s direction for good health, long life, and happiness.

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