

Sabbath School Today **With the 1888 Message Dynamic**

Health and Healing **Lesson 12: “Nutrition in the Bible”**

Does the Bible have anything to say about nutrition, the food we eat, our diet? Does God care about our eating? Have you ever known of a cook who has prepared a special gourmet meal for you as a guest, who hovers over you while you eat, hoping against hope that you like what he/she has prepared, pained and disappointed if you express no genuine appreciation? Could God be like that?

Of course, we know that the Bible says that God created all the food which we enjoy; it says that He “satisfieth [our] mouth with good things.” For example, there’s no other reason why He created strawberries—He created them simply because they taste good (a little illustration of His love)!

Part of the happiness the Lord wants us to know is that our “mouth [be] satisfied with good things; so that [our] youth is renewed like the eagle’s” (Psalm 103:5). Is such dietary pleasure health-inducing? It says so. It’s re-educating our taste to be “reconciled” (“at-one-ment”) to enjoy the foods that God has created to be “received with thanksgiving” (1 Tim. 4:4). Day of Atonement living includes that re-educating our diet.

To list all the delicious foods is impossible. How can you doubt there is a loving Creator who created them all in six days when you consider alone the annual progression of fruits through the year, from the earliest strawberries in spring, through summer peaches, then pears, to those delicious persimmons in late autumn! Just a tiny example of the Lord’s goodness.

The first chapter of Daniel packs a powerful gospel punch: here are four young men in university training where their scholarships provide them access to the elitist dining rooms or cafeterias. They will be served the same gourmet bill of fare from the same kitchens that serve royalty.

The delicacies set before them arouse the envy of wealthy Babylonians. The meats come from the fabled outreaches of the empire, and the desserts are super mouthwatering. But Good News saved them from health disaster.

These four young servants of the God of Israel petition the authorities for a simple, low-fat, low-sugar vegetarian diet. With the hearty appetite of all teens, these four “purpose” in their hearts to deny their natural cravings for rich food and choose the simple diet. Their goal is not merely to live seven years longer and take more holiday trips; they want to keep their minds clear to comprehend the teaching of the Holy Spirit in an era of solemn significance.

We're in that kind of era today, on a world scale. It's great Good News that the same world Savior who blessed Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego will give (not merely offer) you and me the victory over runaway appetite. The Holy Spirit will be your teacher; you won't be able to transgress without His convicting you of truth. "Purpose in your heart" to follow the Savior on this great Day of Atonement.

There is an intimate detail in the Bible about our food: Jesus teaches that the temporal, daily food we eat is ours only because of His great sacrifice in giving Himself for the world. Here it is: "I am the bread of life. ... I am the living bread which came down from heaven, ... and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. ... Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you" (John 6:35, 51-53).

The people didn't understand Him then, and many were so offended by this that they "went back, and walked no more with Him" (vs. 66). What did He mean? Just this: He says that the food you eat day by day is "My body, which is broken for you" (1 Cor. 11:24). This is something startling! Every meal, if we have faith, becomes a sacrament, the Lord's Supper!

Most of us have read the famous quotation by Ellen G. White that "the cross of Calvary is stamped on every loaf [of bread]" (see *The Desire of Ages*, p. 660). But what does it mean? Here are only a few Bible texts that give the answer. Please look at John 6:33: By His sacrifice, Christ has "given life unto the world." Verse 51: He has "given" His "flesh ... for the life of the world." 1 Timothy 4:10: He is already "the Saviour of all men." John 4:42: His name is "the Saviour of the world." Isaiah 53:5, 6: He has died for every person's sin, paid the full penalty because "the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Hebrews 2:9: He has "tasted death for every person."

Romans 5:16-18: as our second Adam, Christ has taken the place of the first Adam. The entire human race was "in him" when he sinned in Eden; now because Christ has taken his place as our second Adam, the entire human race is "in Him" in the same legal, or corporate sense. He has reversed the "condemnation" that came upon "all men" in Adam, and God has given us instead "a verdict of acquittal" in Christ (REB). Revelation 13:8: If Christ had not become "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," the entire human race would have perished in Eden; the human race "lives" because of Him; the sun shines, the rain falls, because of Him; we are all infinitely and eternally in debt to Him, whether or not we know it and whether or not we believe it.

2 Corinthians 5:19: When Christ was on His cross, God imputed the world's trespasses unto Him, not just of a few. The conclusion: John 6:51-53 applies both to our present physical life as well as to our spiritual life. No one can excuse himself from the obligation to yield all to Christ, for He has purchased all; thus His cross is stamped on every loaf of bread, and every meal becomes a sacrament—by faith. The believer "eats and drinks" to "God's glory" (1 Cor. 10:31).

—Robert J. Wieland