

Sabbath School Lesson #2 – Daniel and the End Time – 7-13 April 2018

Christ would have us take lessons from Daniel to reveal prophecy of what will happen in the end of time. “The King answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret” (Daniel 2:47). We focus here on the lesson we learn from Daniel about his vegan diet.

Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, had besieged Jerusalem, and had taken it. The king gave orders that the most promising of the captives of Judah should be trained in royal schools, to be fitted for responsible places in the kingdom. The chosen ones were “of the king’s seed, and of the princes; children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability to stand in the king’s palace, and whom they might teach the learning and tongue of the Chaldeans. And the king appointed for them a daily provision of the king’s meat, and of the wine which he drank” (Daniel 1:3-5).

Among these were, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. But they chose a vegan diet. They did not want the king’s delicacies. Daniel 1:8 literally translated is, “But Daniel set (it) upon his heart that he would not defile himself with the king’s delicacies.” The best diet can only be founded on God’s terms. The original diet is the best, and by God’s grace it is possible. Whilst the Bible does not directly condemn the eating of clean animals, the restrictions around meats – prohibition of fat, blood, and weak and diseased animals – makes it almost impossible for flesh to be truly a best diet man can eat. Those that are wishing to stay in optimum health, to glorify God in their bodies, will eat the best food that they can obtain in their locale. But it must always be borne in mind that a vegan diet is the best for health – a fact for which science offers great evidence today.

The consequences of flesh diet must never be overlooked. We need to go back to the Israelites and examine them then in Babylon. In the book of Daniel from the first chapter, we find there that people like Daniel only ate a plant-based diet, and in the end they were the only ones that did not worship the idol made by King Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel said: “let them give us pulse to eat and water to drink” (Daniel 1:12). Daniel and his friends chose a purely vegan diet, and must God’s people living in these last days of a present-day Babylon, if we must be pure and holy, and avoid worshipping the beast. In Bible prophecy, the Lord sends a call to His People. In Revelation 18:2-4 we find the call “saying, Babylon the great is fallen ... the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies ... Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues”. The “delicacies” of the present-day Babylon include all unclean flesh, and all contaminated clean flesh meats. Whenever you read prophecy, and symbolic terms such as “Babylon” are used, study the types and parallel in the Bible. We turn to God’s people in Babylon of old. In Daniel 1:11-14, we find Daniel and his three friends, who had long read the history of God’s children in the wilderness where God sought to remove flesh diet and return them to the original diet. Having been brought up on Vegan diet, they were not about to indulge in flesh meats, even in the Babylonian King’s palace. They had studied the Scriptures carefully to know the spiritual dangers from cause to effect of meat eating. As God-fearing youth, now in Babylon, they determined they would not defile themselves by indulgence of appetite.

The test of the value of food is what it will do for man. Food is for the purpose of renewing strength. “Blessed art thou, O land, when thy king is the son of nobles, and thy princes eat in due season, for strength, and not for drunkenness!” (Ecclesiastes 10:17). People cannot always determine the goodness of any food by its taste, because almost everybody has a perverted taste. God designs that food shall please the taste, and has given us the sense of taste, so that we may derive pleasure from eating. But the very best food will taste insipid to a perverted palate, and therefore we need to educate our taste. Whatever will keep the body in the best health, and give the body strength, and mental vigour, and will also enable one to endure privation, is the best food, and we should accustom ourselves to enjoy it. When the palate has been trained for a while in the right way, rich and fancy dishes and flesh meats will be distasteful, and simple but wholesome food will, be eaten with a hearty relish. The poor man, with plant food, is not to be pitied. The wealthy people, or any others, for that matter, who are slaves to an appetite that demands flesh meats, and who do not know the pleasure of perfect health and of abstinence, are the ones to be pitied. Most people, instead of eating to live, we actually live to eat. It is very evident that while we are in that state, the Holy Spirit of God cannot control us, and enlighten us. We cannot expect God to give us clear perception of intellect, when we deliberately do that which benumbs the sensibilities. It is like putting our hands into the fire, and expecting that God will keep our fingers from being burned.

As Daniel and his friends were brought to the test, they placed themselves fully on the side of righteousness and truth. They were vegans. They decided that as flesh-meat had not composed

their diet in the past, it should not come into their diet in the future. They knew that the indulgence of appetite would becloud their powers of discernment. By a vegan diet, Daniel and his friends remained pure and holy, and they as a result refused to worship Nebuchadnezzar's idol. The simple truth is this: when God took the Israelites from Egypt, He changed their diet from meats to Manna. Those who disobeyed, perished in the wilderness, and they worshipped idols. When the Israelites were captive in Babylon, they had to change their diet from meat to pulse, those who disobeyed, all worshipped Nebuchadnezzar's idol. The history of Daniel is placed upon record for our benefit. He chose to take a course that would make him singular in the king's court. He did not conform to the habits of the courtiers in eating and drinking, but purposed in his heart that he would not eat of the king's meat nor drink of his wines. This was not a hastily formed, wavering purpose, but one that was intelligently formed and resolutely carried out. By conforming to the original diet appoint to man, vegan diet, Daniel honoured God; and the promise was fulfilled to him. "Them that honour Me I will honour" (1 Samuel 2:30). The Lord gave him "knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom," and he had "understanding in all visions and dreams" (Daniel 1:17); he was wiser than all in the king's courts, wiser than all the astrologers and magicians in the kingdom.

Daniel was a captive in Babylon, with the rest of the Jews, yet he was a pious youth. The Jews were sent into captivity because of their sins, yet Daniel is one of the few men without a shadow of wrong-doing charged against them in the Bible. Thus we see that good people may be brought into trouble in this life through the evil-doing of others. But that good men are brought into difficulties through the sins of others is no ground for complaint. A righteous man cannot be made a captive, even though he be bound with chains. Daniel in Babylon was a free man. When God allows His servants to suffer hardships through the evil-doing of others, it is always for a good purpose. God had work for Daniel in Babylon, as He always has for His servants, wherever they are. Compare the case of Joseph in Egypt. Daniel was free from the Babylonian spirit, which was pride and the exaltation of self above God, and therefore he was free in Babylon. Jesus said, "If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:31-32, 36).

There is never any need for one to compromise his principles. Surely Daniel was in as close a place as anyone ever can be. Many think that if they are guests of some great man, courtesy demands that they should drink his wine, and partake of his dainty meats. So they will lay aside their principles for fear of giving offence. Perhaps they will go so far as to state that they do not believe in eating and drinking such things, but that they will do so 'just on this occasion,' thereby making the case worse than if they said nothing. But Daniel was not merely a guest, free to go away if he chose; he was a captive, subject to the orders of an absolute monarch, whose word was law, and who could with an inclination of the head send one who displeased him to execution. If ever a youth had cause for compromising his principles, Daniel had; but he did not. He knew what was right, and what would please God: and that was what he purposed to do, no matter what the consequences might be. Because of this loyalty to truth and right, God made the way clear for him. When God sends or allows one of His servants to get into a difficult place, like Daniel in Babylon, where the truth is not regarded, it is in order that He may have a witness for the truth in that place.

Firmness of character, and loyalty to principle are esteemed even by the world. Daniel's course was such that he could not fail to be noted, and his prominence was only the advancement of truth. The fact that Daniel made the request that he should not drink or eat of the king's food, would call attention to him, and when it was seen that there was sound wisdom in his choice, the truth was exalted. The man who is recreant to the trust that God has placed in him in a critical time, is of no use. He is passed by as one of the common herd. And the man who feebly makes known what he calls his principles, but puts them aside 'on this occasion,' brings contempt on himself, and causes his associates to think that there is no power in truth. May the God of Daniel make us all as faithful as he was! This He will do if we are willing that He should, and have enough confidence in Him.

Those who serve God in sincerity and truth will be a peculiar people, unlike the world, separate from the world. Their food will be prepared, not to encourage gluttony or gratify a perverted taste, but to secure to themselves the greatest physical strength, and consequently the best mental conditions. Theirs is a simple vegan diet. The world may despise you because you do not meet their standard, you do not eat abominably, nor engage in their dissipating amusements, and follow their pernicious ways; but the God of heaven promises to receive you, and to be a Father unto you. "Ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Corinthians 6:18). Remember, man first fell into sin through appetite. This same temptation continues today. Be a Daniel, eat vegan and serve God even if you stand alone. In Babylon we see Daniel and his friends eating the original diet, and only they did not worship Nebuchadnezzar's idol. It is a lesson to us today.