

Babylon's Buffet - Lesson 18 of 21 - Landmarks of Prophecy

Welcome once again, for those who have just joined us, maybe, on television, those that are here in Albuquerque, we're very thankful that you can be part of this Landmarks of Prophecy Bible study adventure. We're going to start with a story that you find in the Bible in the book of Daniel - Daniel chapter 1 - and it's called 'Babylon's Buffet.' And this is based upon Daniel 1, verses 1 through 21 - it's a whole chapter. Now Daniel is a book that deals a lot with prophecy, but it's interesting how the book of Daniel begins with a test that comes to Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and the test is related to eating and not eating something. You know that was the big test that faced our first parents in the Garden of Eden. And in the last days, the Bible says that unless you worship the beast and its image, you can't buy or sell.

Now you think that's going to be difficult if you can't buy a chainsaw or a hair dryer? Or is it going to be difficult when you can't buy food? And so, understanding these principles of diet and health really do have a bigger role than some people believe. Well, just to give you the background for the story, for some who weren't here in earlier presentations, about 500 years before Christ, King Nebuchadnezzar invaded Jerusalem and on his first attack of the city he carried away thousands of prisoners from Jerusalem to Babylon. And among those he carried away were some of the princes of Jerusalem. Some of them, the Bible foretold, were descendants of King Hezekiah. And they were taken and they were educated in the palace of Babylon. And the king said, 'Look, we're going to teach you the language of the Babylonians - he took the brightest and the best looking of all of the royal children back to Babylon and he said, 'I'm going to train you in all the sciences of Babylon.', which was the most sophisticated place in the world at that time. 'And after three years, those who pass the test - the cream of the crop - will stand before me and they will be representatives to these other nations.'

Nebuchadnezzar was really a very smart leader and he had great counselors, and this was a wise plan. So among some of the thousands that were carried from Jerusalem were four Hebrew young men. Their Jewish names were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Their Babylonian names were Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Well, when they were introduced into this university where they're going to train, the Bible says that they were made eunuchs. You never hear about Mrs. Daniel. In order for you to work in the palace and be one of the king's wise men, they wanted to make sure nobody was bothering the king's harem and keeping their minds on business and so that was something that was often done. And Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego went to this school, but then they found out that they were going to be required to eat from the royal cafeteria.

Now most captives would have been thrilled. All the other students from the other parts of the world that Nebuchadnezzar conquered, they were thrilled that they got to eat at the Babylonian buffet. It was supposed to be the best food in the world. But right away, Daniel and his friends realized they couldn't eat that because there was food in there that God had designated as unclean. And it says in Daniel 1, verse 8, "Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the King's meat." - Or with the wine which he drank. So Daniel went to the chief of the eunuchs that was in charge of their preparation and their training and he said, 'Let us just eat vegetables. Give us ten days.' And you'll find the King James word there is 'pulse.' Some of your translations it just says 'vegetables.' And he said, 'Oh, I can't do that. The king's going to look at you and say, 'How come these young men are sick? And I'm going to say, 'Well, they're not eating the food that you provided.' 'What? My food isn't good enough for them.' He said, 'He'll take my head off.' Daniel said, 'You test us. Give us ten days. If we don't look okay, fine.'

So for ten days they ate nothing but vegetables - they ate vegetable stew and a vegetarian diet - drank water - and the Bible says - Daniel 1, verse 15, "And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh ... than all the children which did eat the portion of the King's meat." They were healthier than those who were eating from the cafeteria of Babylon.

Now why does the Bible include this story? Well, first of all, I think it tells us that there's a link between Daniel being declared one of the wisest people in the Bible next to Solomon. Matter of fact, Ezekiel refers to Job and Noah and Daniel as three of the greatest most holy men. And, of course, Ezekiel lived after him - not long after - and Daniel was extremely bright, as were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

Matter of fact, at the end of chapter 1 and at the end of three years of Daniel and his three friends eating a simple diet - a biblical diet - the Bible says that when Nebuchadnezzar had them tested, probably by himself as well as his other wise men in the kingdom, they found that among all the captives that had been trained, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were ten times wiser - ten times wiser than any of the others who had trained. Now I think that's a combination of the Word of God because the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. And also a healthy diet.

Now, what I'm going to share with you in this presentation is going to be biblically based. It is actually connected with a number of prophecies we're going to share - prophetic books, I should say. But I'm going to tell you what I'll tell you, then I'll tell you, then I'll tell you what I told you. It's very simple, friends, being a Christian is not just about a change in your thinking. Being a Christian is an entire transformation. 'And whatever you eat and whatever you drink, do all to the glory of God.' It does make a difference what you do with your body. Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. And a truth that has been lost, in recent years, to Christianity - both Protestants and Catholics - and Evangelicals - is a very clear biblical teaching that we are to take care of our bodies. We are to be careful. We are to use self-control. And especially is that important when we're living in a society that is drowning in abundance. So even among the good things, I think that we need to exercise self-control.

But you know why this is important? Because God does not communicate with you through your elbow or your toe or your knee. God communicates with you through your brain. And your brain is a combination of a biological organism and the Spirit of God working in it. To this day, neurologists don't know exactly how a human brain holds a thought. They know when you damage a brain, that there's effect. But is a thought a tangible thing? It's a mystery. And if our minds are clear - if our bodies are healthy, it is easier for us to have spiritual perception. Someone asked a question last night about fasting. That's why it makes a difference. Sometimes when you just take care of your body, get some exercise, you eat a simple diet, your mind clears up, it's easier to perceive the voice of the Holy Spirit. So this really does make a very important difference when you're battling temptation, striving for the victory.

Question #1: Let's find out what the Bible teaches on this subject. And we'll have the answers up on the screen. You're welcome and invited to say them with me. Genesis 1, verse - I'm sorry, let me read the question first. Question #1: What was the original diet that God designed for humans, in the beginning? We're going all the way back to Genesis now. First chapter in the Bible - Genesis 1:29 - "And God said, behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed," - and that's talking about every plant - and it goes on to say, "and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat." And that word meat there is the old English word, it means food. It's like the meat of a nut - it just means the food. So the original diet for Adam and Eve was what? Fruits, grains, nuts. It was a fruitarian diet.

They probably didn't even cook any food back there. How long did God intend for Adam and Eve to live when He first made them? Forever. Forever. And then, after sin, God added one more thing to the diet because He said, you can't eat from the Tree of Life any longer.

You read in chapter 2, after Adam and Eve sinned - I'm sorry, Question #2: after Adam and Eve sinned, it says, what supplemental food did God then add to their diet? Genesis 3:18, it says, "Thou shalt eat the herb of the field." That means the vegetable. But a vegetable is technically - oh, let me give you a test to find out: fruit or vegetable?

Banana?

Fruit.

Apple?

Fruit.

Zucchini?

Vegetable.

Fruit.

Eggplant.

Vegetable.

Fruit.

Fruit. Brussels sprouts?

Vegetable.

Un edible. No. Brussels sprouts are actually a vegetable. Celery?

Vegetable.

It's a vegetable. Potato?

Vegetable.

It's a vegetable.

So any part of the plant other than the seed and the product of the flower - a fruit is a product of the flower - is going to be a vegetable. The stalk, the leaves, the flowers, those are all considered to be vegetables - the root - you know, they're tubers - a potato. So He added that to the diet. And there's all kinds of important enzymes and things in there.

Now, I just heard this amazing fact this year. I thought I'd share with you. This couple recently ran the most consecutive marathons - Janette and Alan Murray - Janette and Alan Murray - they - she had overcome breast cancer through a vegan diet. And I'm not giving any medical advice, I'm just telling you what it was. And ten years later they decided to run a marathon a day and break the Guinness Book of World Records - a marathon a day for over a year - down in Australia - that involved 10,000 miles of running - day after day - twenty-six plus miles a day. They ran entirely around Australia and around Tasmania - never missing a day. They are vegan vegetarians. I think it says that they ate 11,000 bananas between the two of them on this trip. Lots of vegetables, lots of avocados, and they did make it. They set the world record. Now she is 64 and he is 68 years of age. It does make a difference. They are - I don't think they took a Sabbath off, but I admire them for their diet and their endurance. I told Karen, I'd like to try and run a marathon before I get too old. I've never done that before. So, there are benefits - there's no question that there are benefits to eating a vegetable-based diet.

For a while people thought that Seventh-day Adventists were kooks, but I don't know if you read the National Geographic a couple of years ago. It said there they picked out the three longest living people in the world. Did you know that? You can go look this up. Number 1, there were people in Sardinia - in - off of Italy in the Mediterranean. The people of Okinawa, and the Seventh-day Adventists, principally in the Loma Linda area where they had a university and there's a large concentration. They studied them - they live the longest of any people groups in the world. And when they asked 'Why do these people live longer?' They said, 'Well Seventh-day Adventists - it's the community, the rest from the Sabbath and their largely - not entirely - but largely vegetarian lifestyle - healthy lifestyle.' And so what we're sharing with you is not some religious belief, this is hard scientific fact, that if you eat - the closer to the biblical diet that God prescribed, the longer you're going to live, the better you're going to feel, the less disease you're going to have.

Who knows best, when you buy a new car, how to take care of that car? The manufacturer. They'll usually put a manual inside the glove box that tells you all of the levels and how often to do the maintenance, the schedule, the program - and if you follow that - I have an Audi - my second Audi. First Audi - ten years - always had the regular maintenance. Never had a problem. Sold it for a good price. Got another one. Five years on - do all the regular maintenance at the manufacturer - no problems. And - I need my car to be dependable so I figure, who knows better than the manufacturer? God's the manufacturer. In the manual He tells you what the ideal diet is for man. And following that diet will certainly make you feel better. I'll share a little more personally with you as we proceed. Matthew chapter 4 - oh, I didn't read the question yet.

Question #3: Is God concerned with our physical health? 'I thought God's only concerned with spiritual things.' - Is that what the Bible teaches? Matthew 4:23, "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, and" - doing what? Healing. "healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people." Does the Lord care about our health? Yes, and He, many times, will miraculously heal people. Sometimes sickness comes just because of genetics, sometimes sickness comes because you are exposed to someone else who is sick. There might be some environmental problem. But, you know, the majority of sickness in our country is self-induced because of lifestyle.

You know why there's a health care crisis in North America? People have always gotten old - they got sick and they died. But it was never God's plan that people spend the last thirty years of their life dying, right? You know how Moses died? God said, 'Moses, time to die.' He said, 'What do you want me to do, Lord?' He said, 'I want you to climb that mountain. We'll take care of it up there.' So it says, 'Moses climbed the mountain' - notice what it says - '120 years of age, his eye had not dimmed and his natural force had not abated.' - His strength - his eye has not dimmed. He climbs a mountain, God says, 'Okay, I'm going to lay you down. Go to sleep. You're dead. Then I'll resurrect you.' So you may get sick. You may get old. You may die but God doesn't intend for us to spend the last half of our lives getting sick and dying. So many Bible Christians I know that have followed these principles, they live up into their 90s and beyond. They're active up until virtually the end. I know several that they just kind of fall over in their gardens.

It doesn't mean if you follow a good biblical health plan you're never going to die, but it means you'll have a lot more abundant life and you'll probably live longer. If people followed this - you know why there's a health care crisis and the medical institutions are bankrupt and so expensive? Because of our lifestyles, in particular in the western cultures because of the rich life, the lack of exercise, and the abundance - people are bringing on diseases early in life and then they are struggling with these diseases for many years and it's causing catastrophic expenses. We'd be able to put a lot of hospitals out of business if we'd just follow the Bible. 3 John 2, "Beloved," - third book of John, verse 2 - "Beloved, I wish above all things" - God says, 'above all things' - "that thou mayest" - what? - "prosper and be in health," - how? - "even as thy soul prospereth."

So what kind of level does He put it on? I want health - physical prosperity - and I want spiritual prosperity. Now, if you can only pick one, pick the spiritual because what profit is it if you have perfect health and you're a terrible sinner? It's not going to save you for eternity. But God says, you know, when you're taking care of the spirit, make sure and take care of the body because having your mind clear and your body healthy makes it easier to serve God, to resist the devil and do God's will. I mean, just bear that point out one degree more. The reason to take care of your body is because of love. The reason to do anything as a Christian is because of love. Because you love God and He made you, you want to honor Him by taking care of the body made in His image. Because you want to serve your fellow man - and you can serve your fellow man a lot better if you feel better. You ever notice it's a lot more fun to go to work and to help others when you feel good? So out of love for God and love for your neighbor and love for yourself, those are the great commandments - love the Lord - love your neighbor as you love yourself.

For all of those reasons you want to take care of your body.

The other thing is if you're just living for physical pleasure, you don't think about exercise, you don't think about what you eat, you don't take care of yourself, other people end up having to take care of you. That's not loving for them. You can - and so, for every reason - for your witness for Christ, for your love for others - you have to take care of yourself. Another one, John 10:10, it says, "I am come that they might have life," - and what kind of life does He want us to have? - "...more abundantly."

You see the fellow in that picture? His name was Banana George. He is skiing barefoot - I've done that - that is very, very hard for a young man to do. He is holding the rope in his teeth. He is, I think, years old in this picture. He continued skiing until 92. He didn't even start skiing until he was in his 40s. He loved bananas and that's why he always wore yellow and they called him Banana Jack. You can have an abundant life. Exercise is very important. He passed away way up in his 90s in 2013, but I always was fascinated by that picture.

Question #4: God promised the children of Israel that if they would serve and obey Him, He would remove all sickness from them. Did He keep His promise? Now, when He brought them out of Egypt, it tells us in Psalm 105, verse 37, they - for forty years who fed them? God took care of feeding them. Principally they ate manna from Heaven, right? It was subsidized with some other things along the way, but it tells us that when they finally entered the Promised Land, "He brought them forth ... And there was not one feeble person among their tribes." God said, 'If you obey My commandments, I will put upon you none of the diseases that came upon the Egyptians.' They're out there in the desert, they're walking frequently - as the pillar of cloud led them through the wilderness - they're getting fresh air, they're getting sunshine, they're eating God's diet, and you know what Caleb said when Caleb entered the promised land? Caleb said, 'I am 85 years old now and I am as strong now as I was forty years ago when I first came to the Promised Land as a spy.' - You remember reading this? The book of Joshua? - He said, 'Let me and my tribe take on the mountain of giants. We're not afraid of them.' And Caleb, who was one of the tribe - part of the tribe of Judah, they took on the Amalekites that lived up in the mountains of Hebron, they conquered it, and that's why the tribe of Judah and Jerusalem ended up being there, because this man was in great health at 85, he led his people into war. And so, you know, it tells us that when they followed God's plan, they were in good health.

Question #5: Why is our health so important to God? 1 Corinthians 6:19, "Your body" - and verse 20 - "is the" - what? - "The temple of the Holy Spirit...therefore, glorify God in your body and your spirit, which are God's." Again, Romans 12:1, "Present your body a living sacrifice," - how? - "holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." God says, 'Look, you've been - you're made in God's image, you belong to God, you are to present, not just your spirit, present your body.' You know, we worship God, not just with our minds, we worship God with our lives in - whether you eat or drink, whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. And this is, I think, very important to the Lord, that we take care of ourselves. You'll have a longer, stronger life, if you follow the biblical principles for health.

Question #6: What's a good Bible rule for healthful living? 1 Corinthians 10:31 - I just read this to you - "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." There's, you know, some things you just cannot eat and drink to the glory of God. And things that you know are kind of destroying your health, that are very bad for you - that's not saying you should never have a treat or never enjoy anything. I'm not saying that. You understand? I'm just saying that Christians need to embrace that we are responsible to God for taking care of ourselves. If I were - who does your body belong to? God. It belongs to God. You're bought with a price. You're fearfully and wonderfully made. We are created. We belong to Him because He's redeemed us. We belong to Him because He has saved us by salvation, by redemption - we're His.

If you were to come to me and say, 'Doug, can I borrow your car? And I just need it for a couple weeks.' I'd say, 'Okay, I've got a spare car. I'll lend you my car.' And you take the car - two weeks later I see you

coming down the road and smoke is coming out of the - under the hood - and the tires are very low or flat - sparks are flying out from one rim because they're so low. And you pull up and the thing gasps and it pops and the crank is rattling as it stops, and you open the door and it falls off. Thing's all dented up and scratched and covered with dirt. And you say, 'Wow, what a great vacation in Mexico. We had so much fun. Rode the Baja 1000. Hey Doug, I've signed up for next year. Can I borrow your car again?' Am I going to lend you my car? No.

How many of you want God to give you a new body when He comes? Do you think that God might have second thoughts if you deliberately destroy the one that He's given you? If you're not taking care of what He's given you - and I realize we all have health challenges. Some things are inherited and you can't always help it. But if we're not trying to take care of the body that God has given us, and we're saying, 'I want an eternal body when Jesus comes.' He'll go, 'Wait, look what you did to this one.' We need to take care of it. We are accountable to God. We've been bought with a price. Present ourselves what? A living sacrifice, amen? Alright, with that in mind, now I'm going to get into some specifics and I hope you're still my friend. You know, we get lots of tough subjects. You're still coming, bless your hearts.

Alright, Question #7: Should a Christian, biblically, use alcoholic beverages? Some churches would say, 'Sure, what's wrong with that? Jesus drank wine.' It was not alcoholic. It was grape juice. The Bible says - Proverbs 20:1 - and the Bible doesn't contradict itself - "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging:" - it's talking about fermented wine, here - "and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." The Bible says 'Give wine to him that is ready to perish.' The Bible tells us that Noah drank wine and he stumbled around naked and something embarrassing happened. Lot's daughters gave their father wine and he slept with his daughters.

Good things do not happen when people drink alcohol. It is the second most deadly drug in North America - no, it's the first most deadly drug in North America. We'll get to the second in just a minute. Christians should not underwrite that. And you might be saying, 'Pastor Doug, I just have, you know, a little bit of wine, you know, once a week, just a little. I have no problem. I don't have a drinking problem.' That may be, but are you aware that one out of seven people does have a drinking problem? And so, how much should a Christian subsidize something that is going to be a bad example for others. Out of love for my brothers and my sisters, I don't drink any alcohol because I don't want to make anyone stumble. And it's just not the kind of witness - would you have a dog that bit one out of seven people that came to your house? 'You just never know. He's pretty good. One out of seven he bites them. I'm sorry.'

It's, you know, wine is a mocker. Alcohol is addictive. Do we all know that? Some people, it just wrecks their lives, it wrecks their marriages, it wrecks careers, it wrecks their health. You know that over fifty percent of the people that will be arrested and go to jail today, it's going to be alcohol related? More than half of the deaths on the highway today can be connected with alcohol. More than half of all the domestic problems and spousal abuse, it's going to be alcohol. More than half of all the child abuse - alcohol will be connected. More than half of the birth defects in a hospital can be connected with alcohol.

How much should a Christian support that? Even if it's nothing in the Bible, common sense ought to tell you Christians should not endorse that by their example. Alcohol is not good for you. 'Oh' - and people say, 'well, but you know, they say a little wine's good for your heart. You heard Dr. De Rose the other night. It has nothing to do with the alcohol in the wine, it's in the grapes. And you can get it by drinking grape juice. You don't have to drink the alcohol. People use that as an excuse.

Question #8: what will God do to those who defile their body temples? 1 Corinthians 6 - it's similar to the other verse - 1 Corinthians 3, rather, 16 and 17, "Ye are the temple of God... If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy." Now you notice what Daniel said - do you remember the words that Daniel used when they offered him the Babylonian wine and the Babylonian banquet - buffet? It

said, "Daniel purposed in his heart not to defile himself with a portion of food which the king offered." You know, it's interesting that sometimes the food that the rich people eat is the worst. Poor people, they eat beans and rice, they do okay. Rich people, they eat all this fancy stuff and they have problems. When I was growing up, my dad sometimes took us out to fancy restaurants and we had escargot - snails, frog legs, turtle steak. I've eaten - you name it, friends, I've eaten squirrel. I've eaten rattlesnake. Before I was a Christian I ate all kinds of things. I'll tell you more in a minute. I don't want to say that yet.

So we're supposed to take care of our bodies. Isn't there a commandment that says - Exodus 20:13, "Thou shalt not kill." Do we all agree with that commandment? Would that include yourself? Is suicide wrong? Is it? Yeah. 'Thou shall not murder.' It's including self-murder. What if you take poison? Is that the same thing as suicide? What if you know the poison's going to take ten years to kill you but you know it's poison? It's just slow suicide. And, you know, in America, virtually every cigarette pack no, every cigarette pack in America - it says, 'Warning: this stuff is going to eventually kill you.' And so, I have Christians periodically ask me, 'Is it okay for a Christian to smoke, you know, just a little moderation?' I say, 'No, I don't think so.'

There will be people in Heaven that smoked. I want to make it clear. There are going to be people in Heaven that drank alcohol. Martin Luther drank beer. I don't think they understood, back then, what we understand. The man who wrote 'Amazing Grace', John Newton, he smoked. Do you know, back when he smoked, doctors actually prescribed tobacco for asthma? Can you imagine that? How many of you knew that? Doctor - yeah. But we know better now. Cigarettes are the number 2 leading cause of death - preventable cause of death in North America - tobacco. And - not to mention that, I know you'll have to think about sacrificing the glamour connected with it, but it makes you prematurely age.

It'll make your voice raspy, and it makes your clothes smell funny. Tobacco - there's nothing good about it. There's no nutritional value and it costs a fortune. And when I was a kid it was 25 cents a pack. Man, I can't believe what people pay for a pack of cigarettes now. You can buy a new car after quitting for a couple years. Seriously. Now I struggled with smoking, so I can relate. My mother smoked. My father smoked. My grandparents smoked. And I just grew up inhaling it -second-hand smoke. And then I started smoking at thirteen. And when I finally quit, it was a struggle. Mark Twain said, "Quitting's not hard, I've done it hundreds of times." Staying quit is a challenge. I finally had to ask myself, 'What would Jesus do? Can I picture Jesus chewing tobacco, running down His face and spitting and blowing smoke rings and, I mean, why would you do that? It's addictive.

Question #9: What does the Bible say, more specifically about eating? Are there some mammals - some foods that are clean and some that are unclean? You know, Daniel said he wouldn't defile himself with the meat which the king's servants were eating. What mammals does God permit humans to eat? That's question #9. You look in Leviticus 11, verse - it tells us that there are two criteria that are supposed to be on a mammal that is going to be eaten. It says, 'Whatsoever' - what? - "parteth the hoof, and is cloven footed, and cheweth the cud, these are clean." Now that would mean that goat, sheep, deer, elk, moose, these things are what you would call clean animals. But then he goes on to say some things that may chew the cud, like a camel, but it doesn't have a cloven hoof - it needed both criteria - they're unclean. I know some of you are probably thinking, 'Oh, Doug, you're telling me I have to get rid of my camel steak tonight after the program?' Yes.

That's why Jesus made fun of the Pharisees, He said, 'You're hypocrites. You strain a gnat' - what He meant by that was they used to pour their water through these straining cloths. They said, 'Lest we have a gnat in there and it's unclean.' They would strain their water to prevent eating a gnat, but when no one was looking they'd eat a camel steak, which was unclean, biblically. It says, 'You strain a gnat and you swallow a camel.' You ever heard that expression before? It's what he's talking about. He's saying, 'You're hypocrites. You know camel's unclean but you're so afraid of a little gnat. When no one's looking you eat camel steak.

So - but even among the clean animals, I think you need to be very careful, friends. We've seen a lot in the news about meat. You've got the salmonella poisoning and you've got the e-coli and animals are more diseased and they're being mass produced and their having recalls and I think you're better off just not eating it. Now, I'll admit, I'm biased. I'm a vegetarian. I've been a vegetarian for 38 years, I think, yeah. I mean, I think people have probably slipped things to me before at potlucks where I didn't know about, but I've done my best. I don't consciously ever eat meat. And - hey, I'm in pretty good shape for an old man. the Lord's taken care of me. Praise the Lord. I recommend it. I think science supports it. Now, biblically, you're allowed to eat meat, I'm just being honest with you. If you're going to eat meat, it needs to have those two criteria - be cloven hoofed and chew the cud.

Now some of you are thinking, 'Pastor Doug, but didn't - aren't humans designed to eat meat and isn't that why God gave us these, you know canine teeth, for the ripping and tearing of meat?' You see this character on the screen? He's got canine teeth too. He's a vegetarian. So that's just - there's all kinds of myths out there. Matter of fact, the animal with the biggest teeth is an elephant and a hippo - they're all vegetarians. So people say all kinds of things.

Look at what happened biblically when - before the flood you can see - of course, there's lots of vegetation back then - you've got Methuselah - 969 years, Noah 950 years, Seth 912 years. Immediately after the flood it drops down to 500 years, 200 years - Abraham 175 years, Jacob 147 years, David 70 years. And David said, 'Now our years are threescore and ten.' - That's about 70 - as an average. And he said, 'If by reason of strength it's fourscore' - that's 80 - he said, 'It's still with much pain and suffering.' So our time is limited. But, you know what happened after the flood, all the vegetation was destroyed. Noah was told to take the clean animals on the ark by sevens. If they were allowed to eat the unclean animals, there'd be a lot more extinct species, right. They would have eaten them during the flood. But you're only allowed to sacrifice the clean animals.

Now here's what I was going to share with you. Do you see that handsome character in the picture there? You know who that is? That's me with a wig. No, that's my hair, believe it or not, I actually had - now you can only see the edge of it. I had a meat business in Palm Springs, California. I had a cooler in my VW, I sold prime beef steak. I drove around the desert cities and I was buying large sections of beef. I was eating steak three times a day sometimes - not exaggerating. Because I had all the best cuts - New York, filet mignon, T-bone. And I'd buy large sections, I'd butcher them, I took them around and sold them. It was prime beef. I bought it wholesale and I'd sell it to customers and I learned a lot.

For one thing - just before this I was living in the mountains. I had no refrigeration. I was living like a hermit and I had to eat, pretty much, a vegetarian diet because I had no way to keep it. I felt great. I came down to town, started eating meat on a regular basis, I started feeling, oh, just yucky - slow - didn't have energy. And I started learning things. This is before I ever even was going to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. I started learning things. I said, 'You know, I think I'm better off not eating meat.' And that's what really changed my mind. And then I saw all this stuff that was in the Bible in addition to that. And it convinced me.

Question #10: What types of fish and seafood are considered clean, biblically? Leviticus 11, verse 9, "These you shall eat of all that are in the waters: whatever hath fins and scales" - it needed both characteristics to be clean. And the reason for that was because there's a lot of strange things that are out there in the ocean and some of them are poisonous. You know, the U.S. Navy did a study a few years ago, where they said, 'What do we give as a rule of thumb to sailors or pilots that are shot down if they need to eat seafood while they're floating around on these rafts. Because during World War II a lot of them, they didn't know what they could and couldn't eat. They spent millions of government dollars - they did a study - and you know what they came back with? This is what the Navy study concluded: if it has fins and scales it's probably safe to eat. They could have saved so much money and just read what the Bible said. Now you can read on there in Leviticus and it says in Leviticus 11, verse 10, "These shall ye

eat of all that are in the waters:" that means rivers, seas, lakes - all the other water creatures – “that do not have fins and scales. All that move in the waters or any living thing that moves in the water, they are an abomination to you.” There's no stronger word that is used in the Bible to describe something that God says is unclean.

Now a lot of Christians know this. It's not just my church - that these things are not healthy. And Christians need to avoid them. In that group you've got, of course, shrimp - I used to love shrimp cocktail - I used to go out snorkeling and spear my own lobster - boiled lobster tails - 'Oh, it tastes so good.' We're not talking about taste now, we're talking about what God said isn't good for you. By the way, you can't eat anything that has more cholesterol in it than a lobster tail, especially if you dip it in butter. You may as well just go get an I.V. with cholesterol and mainline it because that - it's about as bad as it gets. Buy why doesn't God want us to eat certain things? These animals - crabs, lobsters - you know how they catch them? They're scavengers - they put some decomposing fish head in a trap and they are made by God to be the garbage cans in the world to clean the environment. They eat all the toxins - clams, they soak up all the toxins. We have one president that died from eating contaminated oysters.

And these things are just - they're not healthy. Shrimp - when they serve shrimp they serve it in complete with the intestines - the digestive tract is still in there. That's not God's - that stuff's not good for you. There's - down in the bottom of the bay where you get the oysters and the clams, are all the toxins. There - these animals are made by God to filter and help clean the environment.

Same thing with certain birds that are considered unclean. You look in - Question #11: Which birds are unclean? In Leviticus 11, verses 15 and it says, "Every raven after his kind; and the owl, and the night hawk, and the cuckow, and the hawk after his kind." They were all unclean. You know which birds are considered unclean? The foraging birds - no, no, I said that wrong - the raptors and the carnivorous birds are considered unclean. The clean birds - there's not a rule like fins and scales - but the clean birds are the foraging birds. That would be the birds that go around through the woods and they peck on things and they eat the seeds - turkey, dove - I don't know anyone going hunting for them, but, technically, they're clean. The chickens - I went to a slaughterhouse one time and I have no appetite for chicken -they're unclean - they're clean, rather, but technically, a lot of it - the way that they're dealt with today, I would not feel comfortable. So the foraging birds, pheasants, so forth, they would be clean.

Question #12: Are the laws about clean and unclean animals part of Moses' ceremonial law, which ended at the cross? This is what some people think. Genesis 7, verses 1 and 2 - some people say, 'Oh, those are laws just for the Jews.' Those clean and unclean laws. Was Noah Jewish? Let's read this together: "Come thou and all thy house into the ark ...of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens," - you know we all sing the song, 'The animals came two by two' but you read the whole story there and it says the unclean animals came two by two. The clean animals were taken by sevens. 'And of the beasts that are not clean, you'll take by two.'

So does God make a distinction between clean and unclean animals even before there were any Jews? Quiz: how many of you are related to Noah? All of us. That's right, everybody here. And so if God made it a test - I don't know if any of you managed - your ancestors survived the flood besides Noah - everybody here is related to Noah. God made a distinction - these are things that were for mankind. You can see it going all the way back to Genesis. Galatians chapter 6, verse 7, Paul says, "Do not be deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man" - or a woman - "soweth, that shall he also reap." You cannot be sowing unto yourself lots of cholesterol and lots of sugar and no exercise and expect to reap good health. You're going to reap the wrong harvest. It's cause and effect. You can't say, 'Oh I'm just going to have faith. I'm going to destroy my body and just believe.' It just doesn't work that way. You - God wants you to take care of your body.

Here's a picture someone just gave me this year. This is someone Karen and I were pastors of this church in northern California and one sister, last time we saw her she was 106. At the time this article - she's

passed away since - she was 111 then. And I remember I sat with her and her brother-in-law and his wife - her name is Viola Cook - in their home and I would eat with them - they had delicious vegetarian food. She was a vegetarian her whole life. And I remember her brother-in-law, I used to say, 'Art, how do you guys have such great health and strength?' Here I was a young whippersnapper - I'd try and do work for him - I couldn't keep up with him. And I noticed he pushed away from the table, I said, 'You're done eating?' He said, 'Here's a secret to life, Doug. Stop eating while you're still a little hungry, wake up when you're still a little tired, and stop talking when you still have something left to say.' He said, 'That's the secret to happiness in life.'

Question #13: Does God say that eating unclean foods is a serious offense? Now catch this: Isaiah 66, verses 15 and 17, "For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with His chariots like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury." It goes on to say, "They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves" - hiding behind a tree - "eating" - what? - "Swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse," - notice it's lumping that all together - "shall be consumed together, saith the Lord."

Now I didn't mention it specifically, yet, but you know what else has a cloven hoof but it doesn't chew the cud. Most of you don't have a problem with camel, but pig is biblically unclean. How many of you knew that? That's a very popular thing. They try to sell it by saying, 'It's the other white meat.' But most food specialists will tell you that pork probably isn't even classified in a food group, it is a fat-laden carcinogenic thing full of nitrates and salt. God has scavengers in the sky - they're called buzzards - you're not supposed to eat them. They are in the unclean category. He's got scavengers in the water - catfish - they don't have scales. They're scavengers. They go on the bottom. You put them in the tank to clean up everything else. Sharks are scavengers - they don't have scales. Oysters, clams - on the earth, dogs were scavengers, pigs are scavengers as well as skunks and some other things.

God does not want us eating the garbage cans. And I know some of you think, 'Oh, Pastor Doug, you're getting nothing better than sizzling bacon, right? You're getting a BLT - nothing - oh man, ham sandwich.' And you've got to make up your mind. Are you going to be controlled by the Spirit or the flesh? Yeah, I know. You wanted me to tell you that there's no self-denial. If you're going to be a Bible Christian these things are called unclean. Matter of fact, God says it's an abomination. Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. You know, in the temple, you can bring as a sacrifice in the temple - you could bring a lamb, you could bring a dove, you could bring a deer, you could bring a ram, you could bring a clean animal. The highest insult that you could perform to God in Bible times was to bring a pig into the sanctuary.

Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Why would you want to bring a pig inside your body? And it's not like there's nothing else to eat. Daniel and his friends were ready to die rather than to do that. I know what some of you are thinking - "Now, Pastor Doug, doesn't the Bible say as long as we pray over it, it doesn't matter what we eat?" Let's look at that verse. 1 Timothy 4:4 - I just came back from Australia where they eat alligators - crocodiles - "For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving:" Have you heard that? Have you known people before that said, 'Well, you just pray over it and you receive it with thanksgiving.'

Let's see if you really believe that. How many of you are parents? Your kids are getting ready for school. They're, you know, twelve, thirteen years old, they're getting themselves breakfast and you watch as they take Fruit Loops out - shouldn't even be in the cupboard, but let's suppose you buy the Fruit Loops - Count Drac - Chocula - whatever those - it's almost all sugar - they pour that in their bowl, then they get out the sugar and they start putting sugar on top of that and you go, 'What are you doing?' Then they get some ice cream and they're starting to put ice cream and you go, 'Wait a second! What are you doing?' And then they go and get a Twinkie too. And just 'You're not eating that for breakfast!' They say 'No, wait. Mom, dad, watch. I'm going to ask God to bless it and it really won't matter. Once I pray over it, it doesn't matter.' How many of you would buy that argument - that your kids could eat whatever? You wouldn't let your kids use that kind of irresponsible argument. Why do we use it with God and think

He's going to let His kids?

That statement, where it says 'Every creature of God is good and nothing to be refused' it's not talking about anything you can eat. He's talking about whether or not you can eat things sacrificed to idols. He's speaking of the clean animals that had been sacrificed to idols. It has nothing to do with 'God said every creature is good.' You really think your stomach's different than Noah's? Or even a Jew? Of course God wants us to take care of our health. Someone's going to say, 'What about the vision that Peter has in Acts chapter 10? Where this sheet full of all kinds of creepy things is lowered down to the earth and God said, 'Arise, kill and eat.' And Peter said, 'Not so Lord, I've never eaten anything common or unclean.' Three times this vision happens where this sheet comes down from Heaven and it's got pigs and camels and snakes and all kinds of things in it. God says, 'Arise, kill and eat.' Peter tells the Lord, 'Not so.' Now, keep in mind, this is happening - Acts chapter 10 - long after Jesus is dead. Peter says, 'I have never eaten anything common or unclean. They never got the idea from Jesus it was okay to eat things that were unclean.

The vision happens three times. Peter never takes anything out of the sheet. It's hard to eat a vision anyway, it's just a vision. He never takes anything out of the sheet. He keeps saying 'No,' wonders if this is a test. While Peter's saying, 'Lord, what does this mean?' Messengers knock on the front door that are Gentiles. They are saying, 'Come preach to the Gentiles.' Peter, telling the church later what the vision meant - Acts 10:28 - he says, "But God hath shown me that I should not call any man" - m-a-n - "common or unclean." You see, the Jews were out preaching to the Gentiles and Paul said, you're calling them unclean. You need to start going to the Gentiles. They were being a little bit racist still thinking God was just saving the Jews. It had nothing to do - nothing to do with pork or what kind of food. It was a vision saying, 'Do not call the Gentiles unclean.'

People have abused this verse and misused it and they're being biblically dishonest with it. Does God care? Does it matter what we eat? Why is there sin in the world today? God said 'Do not eat' something and they didn't listen. And we've got all kinds of problems in the world because we didn't listen to what God said not to eat. He made us and we need to be careful to honor Him and glorify Him with our bodies.

Question #14: What is a good basic health rule for Christians? 1 Corinthians 9:25, "Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things." And God wants us to be careful in what we eat. Have you ever wondered what was the fruit on that forbidden tree? You know, there was the Tree of Life and it was the other tree called 'the knowledge of good and evil.' I did some research and I figured out exactly what that fruit was. It was called chocolate. No, I made that up.

Question #15: Are the Bible health principles still practical today? Now we're going to go through a list of several Bible principles and these are health principles and you're going to be surprised how much the world now is realizing these are basic health laws that are all in the Bible.

First of all, quarantine procedures control contagious disease. With this Ebola discussion, what are they talking about? Look at the incredible lengths they're going to maintain a sterile environment and quarantine procedures. In the Bible, God gave that. He said, 'If someone is unclean they need to wash. They need to stay outside the camp, they're contagious.' There's all kinds of laws about contagion. They understood this in the Bible. #2 - Basic thing, again connected with Ebola. If these things were being practiced in some of the countries, it says human body waste should be buried. I know, it may not be pleasant to think about that, but if you've traveled, many parts of the world I go to, even in big cities, they still don't have regular sanitation. And I know it would shock you - I won't name those countries because I don't want to offend anybody now, but way back in the Bible, even going through the desert, God gave them certain rules about that.

Answer C: Washing - regular washing of the body and clothing controls germs. You know, that's in the

Bible. They had to regularly wash. Even as they went through the wilderness, God always made sure they had a water supply. Moses would strike the rock and water would run out and this river seemed to be reproduced and followed them wherever they went in their journeys. So they could not only drink, but so they could wash. And frequently it talked about washing.

The Bible tells us that a lot of disease can also be prevented, as we know today, by moral living. It prevents sexual diseases. Leviticus 18, Proverbs 5, verses 1 through 12, and many other verses. There are a number of sexually transmitted diseases and some people have received fatal infections because of immoral lifestyle.

Answer E: another Bible principle about health: "Animal fat should not be eaten." - Not only fat, but blood. You know, disease can be transferred from animal to animal. You don't catch a disease from a plant. You might get poison ivy, but disease can be transferred from animal to animal. And He says we should not eat blood. By the way, New Testament/Old Testament both say blood is forbidden. Acts 15, read it yourself. No question about it. Some people say, 'Oh, these are Old Testament laws.' It's repeated in the New Testament.

Answer F: Another principle - hatred and bitterness is detrimental to one's health. Some people are sick not just because of what they're eating but because of what's eating them. And having anger and bitterness in your heart, stress - it really does cause health problems.

Answer G: Proverbs talks about overeating is bad for your health. It's one thing to eat honey - it says, 'Don't eat too much.' And you can even eat too much of good things. And sumo wrestlers usually don't die of old age. Because it's just obviously not good.

Answer H: Our bodies need proper rest. Psalms 127, verse 2 and Mark 6:31- the Sabbath is all about that - getting plenty of sleep.

Answer I: The importance of work. Not only does it say rest the seventh day, it says 'Six days thou shalt' - what? - 'Work.'

Answer J: A positive attitude is good medicine. The Lord wants us to have good - 'A happy heart is good like a medicine.' And even when I teach some of these difficult truths, you know, I think sometimes we need to just be able to smile because life is tough enough.

Answer K: The parents' habits will affect the children. And so, whatever parents do, unto the third and fourth generation, it often affects the children. Parents that smoke - much higher chance their children will smoke. Parents that drink - much higher chance. A lot of families said, 'Oh, well, you know, I gain weight because it just is in my family.' You did not inherit gaining weight from your parents, you inherited, usually, your eating habits from your parents, which means you'll end up with the same size. And so, a lot of that is passed on by lifestyle that we learn.

Question #16: Will people in Heaven kill and eat animals? One more plug for vegetarianism. Again, the Bible says if you're going to eat meat, you can eat clean meat. But just think about it, when Adam was naming the animals, did he name them 'McNuggets, buffalo wings, Whopper?' When he named the animals they were his friends, right? Isaiah 65, it says the animals won't even eat each other. They will not hurt and destroy in all of My holy mountains, saith the Lord. Revelation 21:4, "There'll be no more death." No more death. That means we're not going to be killing and eating them there. I'm just getting ready for Heaven now.

Question #17: How can I make diet and health changes that will please the Lord? Ezekiel 11, verse 18, "They shall take away all the detestable things thereof." God wants us to say, 'Lord, by faith, I'm going to put away the things that are detestable.' Remember, God said, 'By fire and My sword I will plead with all flesh and those that continue to sanctify themselves eating those things which are unclean will be devoured.' That's what it says in Isaiah. God does care. If we just treat our bodies like garbage cans - 'Do

not be deceived. Whatever a man sows, he'll also reap.' We'll all give an account someday for what we've done - what we've said.

And so, God wants us to take care of our bodies, amen? How many of you want to trade this one in on a newer model? God says He'll give them a new heart. He'll put a new spirit within us. You know, before we close our service with prayer today, I would like to invite Mary to come out. She's going to sing a verse of a familiar spiritual that reminds us that we don't want anything to be separating us from the Lord. And if we have something in our lives where we need to have a change, we can ask God to help us get that victory. Only through Christ we can do it, amen?

Nothing between my soul and my Savior,
Not of this world's delusive dream,
I have renounced all sin for pleasure,
Jesus is mine there's nothing between.

You know, friends, when I present this subject, there's just so much, people go 'Wow! I didn't realize the Bible had so much to say about health. I would like to live a longer, stronger life. I'd like to have a more abundant life. But it means, sometimes, making difficult changes to long ingrained habits. You may not be able to do these things all at once - nobody usually can - but say, 'Lord, help me make the changes where I can glorify You in my body. Let's pray now and let's ask Him.

Father in Heaven, we've learned a lot tonight and I just pray that Your spirit will take the words that are spoken from Your Word. We see that when Daniel and his friends followed these things, they lived long lives - ten times wiser when they had the self-control to refuse the buffet of Babylon. Be with all of us, Lord, that our minds might be clear, that our bodies might be well, that we might have lives that will glorify You and have more strength to serve You. Bless each person here for that purpose. I thank You and pray in Jesus' Name, amen.