

Back to the Original Diet

A Bible Study on the History of Man's Diet and the Call to Health Reform

Key Principle: “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” — 1 Corinthians 10:31

Study Purpose

This study traces the history of man's diet from Creation, through the Fall, after the Flood, through Israel's health laws, and into the New Testament church. The central lesson is that diet is not merely a physical issue. It is connected with worship, obedience, temperance, and the restoration of God's image in man.

1. Our Diet Before Sin

Genesis 1:29 — “And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.”

Before sin entered the world, God gave mankind a simple plant-based diet. The original diet in Eden consisted of fruits, nuts, grains, herbs, and legumes.

Key Point

The original diet was given before sin, disease, death, and degeneration entered the world. This makes Eden the biblical starting point for understanding God's ideal for human health.

2. Our Diet After Sin

Genesis 3:17–19 — “Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread...”

After sin, the earth was cursed, and vegetables were added to man's diet. Humanity would now labor under the effects of sin, eating bread in the sweat of the face until returning to the dust.

Key Point

Vegetables were added after sin. Even after the Fall, God's diet for mankind remained rooted in food from the earth.

3. Diet After the Flood

Genesis 9:3 — “Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.”

After the Flood, flesh food was permitted. The study notes that this allowance was connected to the temporary conditions following a worldwide flood, when vegetation had been destroyed and food availability was radically altered.

Genesis 7:22–23; 8:22

Flesh was permitted after the Flood, but the permission came with clear restrictions. God did not remove all distinction, order, or health principle from the diet.

4. Requirements for the Flesh Food Diet

In Leviticus 11, God reemphasized to Israel the principles of a clean and healthy diet. Not all flesh food was edible, even under the wilderness circumstances of a people recently delivered from Egyptian bondage. By restating these principles, God showed that health principles were not arbitrary; they were grounded in His order from Creation.

No Blood

Genesis 9:3–4 — “Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you... But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat.”

Leviticus 7:26–27 — “Moreover ye shall eat no manner of blood, whether it be of fowl or of beast, in any of your dwellings...”

Leviticus 17:10, 12 — “No soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you eat blood.”

Flesh food was permitted, but never with the blood. The life is in the blood, and God specifically forbade its use as food.

No Fat

Leviticus 3:17 — “It shall be a perpetual statute for your generations throughout all your dwellings, that ye eat neither fat nor blood.”

Leviticus 7:23–27 — “Ye shall eat no manner of fat... Moreover ye shall eat no manner of blood...”

God also forbade the eating of fat. The prohibition against fat and blood shows that even when flesh was permitted, it was strictly regulated.

Nothing That Dies of Itself

Leviticus 22:8 — “That which dieth of itself, or is torn with beasts, he shall not eat to defile himself therewith: I am the LORD.”

Deuteronomy 14:21 — “Ye shall not eat of any thing that dieth of itself...”

Ezekiel 4:14 — “Neither came there abominable flesh into my mouth.”

God forbade His people from eating animals that died of themselves or were torn by beasts. The issue was defilement, holiness, and separation unto the Lord.

5. Diet Instructions for Gentile Converts

Acts 15:20 — “That they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood.”

Acts 15:29 — “That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication...”

Acts 21:25 — “...that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication.”

The New Testament church continued to recognize restrictions connected with blood, strangled animals, idolatrous pollution, and moral purity. This shows continuity between reverence for God, bodily purity, and practical Christian living.

6. The Body as God’s Temple

1 Corinthians 10:31 — “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”

1 Corinthians 3:16–17 — “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?... the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.”

Eating and drinking must be brought under the glory of God. The body is not an object for appetite to govern. It is the temple of God, and the Spirit of God is to dwell in it.

7. Health Reform in the Latter Days

Hosea 3:5 — “Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God... and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days.”

Hosea 4:1–3 — “The LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land...”

The latter days are marked by a call to return to the Lord and fear His goodness. Hosea also connects moral corruption with consequences in the land, the beasts, the fowls, and the fishes. The spiritual and physical world are not disconnected in Scripture.

8. Spiritual Lessons from Israel

Exodus 16:3–4 — “Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots... Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you... that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no.”

Exodus 16:12 — “At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God.”

Israel’s appetite became a test of loyalty. God used the manna experience to prove whether His people would walk in His law. The issue was not food alone. It was faith, submission, and obedience.

Numbers 11

Numbers 11 should be studied in connection with Exodus 16. Israel’s craving for flesh revealed dissatisfaction with God’s provision and a lingering desire for Egypt. Appetite became a battlefield between faith and rebellion.

Elijah’s Wilderness Provision

1 Kings 17:6 — “And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook.”

God can provide for His servants under emergency circumstances. However, emergency provision should not be confused with God’s original ideal or His broader principles of health and holiness.

9. Summary Timeline of Man’s Diet

Period	Dietary Development	Key Texts
Before Sin	Fruits, nuts, grains, herbs, legumes	Genesis 1:29
After Sin	Vegetables added; labor and sorrow enter human experience	Genesis 3:17–19
After the Flood	Flesh food permitted under post-	Genesis 9:3–4

	Flood conditions	
Israel's Health Laws	Clean/unclean distinctions; no blood, no fat, nothing that dies of itself	Leviticus 3, 7, 11, 17, 22; Deuteronomy 14
New Testament Church	Gentile converts instructed to abstain from blood and strangled things	Acts 15; Acts 21
Latter-Day Application	Eating and drinking to the glory of God; body as temple	1 Corinthians 10:31; 1 Corinthians 3:16–17

10. Closing Appeal

The biblical history of diet shows a movement from God's original ideal, through allowances made because of sin and emergency, toward a call to restoration. The question is not merely what is lawful under every circumstance, but what best honors God, strengthens the body, clarifies the mind, and prepares a people to stand in the last days.

Health reform should not be handled as pride, fanaticism, or mere outward restriction. It should be received as part of the broader work of sanctification: bringing appetite, body, mind, and spirit under obedience to God.

Discussion Questions

1. What was God's original diet for mankind before sin?
2. What changed after sin entered the world?
3. Why was flesh food permitted after the Flood?
4. What restrictions did God place on flesh food?
5. Why does the New Testament still mention abstaining from blood and things strangled?
6. How does appetite become a test of loyalty and faith?
7. How should 1 Corinthians 10:31 guide Christian eating and drinking today?
8. What practical steps can believers take to move closer to God's original plan?

Closing Prayer

Father in heaven, teach us to honor You in body, mind, and spirit. Help us to understand Your original plan, to respect the principles of health You have revealed, and to surrender appetite to Your will. Make our bodies fit temples for Your Spirit, and prepare us to glorify You in all that we eat, drink, and do. In Jesus' name, amen.