

Among the birds, scavengers are definitely out. We don't typically eat a lot of scavengers, but just in case, here's the general rule: it would seem that these birds with a crop and a gizzard tend to be clean (like chicken, turkey, quail and pheasant).

Those who live by these rules of diet live better and longer lives! How serious is God about this? **Isaiah 66:15-17** indicates that it is still an issue at the Second Coming.

**Romans 12:1** asks us to present our bodies as a living sacrifice to God, and He's given us all the information we need to take better care of them! Aren't you thankful He watches out for every detail in your life?

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Some people have pointed to Peter's vision in **Acts 10:9-17** as proof that Christians can eat what they please. This is *not* what this story is about! Verse **17** tells us that Peter had doubts as to what the vision meant—it clearly couldn't mean that clean foods were suddenly healthy!

When the vision was over, a group of Gentiles appeared at the door, wanting to hear the gospel. Jews traditionally considered Gentiles to be "unclean." God was trying to prepare Peter, in a symbolic vision, to share the gospel with Gentiles. In **Acts 10:28**, Peter makes it abundantly clear what the vision meant: "God hath shewed me that I should not call any *man* common or unclean." This vision had nothing to do with pigs—it had everything to do with preaching the gospel!

# THE VOICE OF PROPHECY SPEAKS

WHAT BIBLE PROPHECYSAYS ABOUT YOUR FUTURE

## LESSON 21 TURN THE CLOCK BACK!

There are two things that you typically find Jesus doing in the gospels: (1) preaching and teaching, and (2) healing the sick. (See **Matt. 9:35**) Some have commented that that Jesus actually spent more time healing the sick than preaching! Our well being is obviously important to Him.

The Bible is full of good advice for getting more out of life. In **John 10:10**, Jesus assures us that His desire is for us to live a more abundant life! In **3 John 1:2**, John indicates a desire for his friends to be healthy both spiritually and physically!

The ancient Greeks made a great distinction between the physical and spiritual parts of our lives. To them, spiritual things were important; physical things weren't nearly as important. Their ideas made their way into Christianity over the years, and *we* started to assume that our God isn't interested in our physical well-being.

The Bible, however, reveals a close relationship between a spiritual relationship with God and our physical well-being. In **Exodus 15:26** and **23:25**, God told the Israelites that if they maintained a close relationship with Him, and followed His commands, they would enjoy better health. God describes Himself as the "Lord that healeth thee."

One of the first principles to better health is to be sure that you're right with God. Good spiritual health will spill over into your physical health.

The second principle is simple: what you put into your body is what you'll get out of it. Don't forget: your body is not your own! **1 Corinthians 6:19,20** teaches that God has purchased our bodies with the blood of His Son—they belong to Him.

That makes our bodies very expensive and valuable property—and knowing that they belong to somebody else ought to prompt us to take better care of them! What's the best way to take care of them? Check out the Owner's Manual—the Bible!

The Bible is full of great advice for making our bodies run at peak efficiency. What we put into them makes all the difference.

Think about some of the things people routinely put into their bodies—and then are surprised when they get sick!

More than 1.2 billion people worldwide, for example, still smoke cigarettes, even though on a world-wide basis, smokers die 22.5 years early! One cigarette has 1.2 milligrams of nicotine in it—enough to kill 7 people if it were injected directly into their veins! On top of the nicotine, cigarette smoke contains more than 4,000 chemical compounds, including arsenic, hydrogen cyanide, mercury, carbon monoxide, and lead.

In Canada, smoking is a huge drain on the resources of the medical system. In 1992, more than 200,000 people went to hospital because of tobacco and spent 3 million days there! Smoking costs us \$9.5 billion a *year* in lost productivity, health care costs and other related problems.

We're supposed to glorify God in our bodies (**1 Corinthians 6:19,20**). Can you smoke to the glory of God? Of course not. Even though the Bible doesn't say, "Thou shalt not smoke", the principles are clear: thou shalt not kill! Smoking is a slow but sure death. The good news is that God is bigger than any addiction and can give you victory over it. If you struggle with a cigarette addiction, talk to someone about it—we'd be delighted to help!

Another poisonous substance people routinely put into their systems is alcohol, even though passages such as **Proverbs 20:1, 23:29-33** and **Isaiah 5:22** are clear that God warns us to stay away from it. We're not even supposed to look at it! Alcohol has left a string of broken homes and ruined lives in its wake. It has been linked to stomach cancer, liver damage, brain damage, heart disease, foetal deformities, and dozens of other illnesses that kill people. In Canada alone, more than 86,000 people a *year* are admitted to hospital because of alcohol.

Clearly, Christians cannot drink liquor to the glory of God! It impairs our judgment, lowers our inhibitions, and robs us of the sobriety we need to make good decisions in this critical hour of earth's history.

Some will argue, however, that Jesus provided alcohol at the wedding feast in Cana. (**John 2**). The governor of the feast, however, was clearly sober after an entire day of drinking wine—he was able to tell that Jesus' wine was good! (**John 2:9,10**). In the Bible, both grape juice and alcoholic wine are simply referred to as "wine." Which kind do you suppose Jesus would provide, when He was always so concerned about pain, suffering, and disease? The answer is obvious—it was grape juice—*nonalcoholic wine*. You couldn't picture Jesus giving out beer at one of your parties, could you?

Can Christians drink to the glory of God? Absolutely not!

Another favourite poison receiving more and more attention in medical circles as of late is caffeine. It has now been linked to sleep disorders, high blood pressure and tension, tremors and convulsions, irregular heart beats, birth defects, and constricted blood vessels in the brain. Some studies seem to indicate that it also increases the potential of cancer causing substances in your body!

There are some things that a Christian simply shouldn't be putting into his or her body, because they damage the fine workings of the human machine. God asks us to take the best care possible of the one body He gave us. It's got to last a lifetime!

So what *should* we put into our bodies? **Genesis 1:29** reveals that the original diet prescribed for humans was a vegetarian diet. Adam and Eve didn't slaughter animals in the Garden of Eden. Today, nutritionists are telling us that more fruits and vegetables and less fatty meat and cholesterol would be much better for us.

The Bible reveals vegetarianism as the *ideal* diet, but doesn't require it. Eventually, God gave us permission to eat meat—but not just *any* meat. He made a clear-cut distinction between clean and unclean meats.

Wasn't this distinction only for the Jews? No. What was bad for a Jew was also bad for a Gentile! In **Genesis 7:1,2** we discover that Noah knew the distinction between clean and unclean animals *hundreds* of years before there were any Jews around!

Most unclean animals are simply scavengers. They eat the filth of the earth and clean up garbage and dead carcasses. They were never meant for food. When we eat scavengers, we pick up all the toxins they ingest when cleaning up filth!

**Leviticus 11** lays out principles for distinguishing between clean and unclean animals. Among the land animals, anything that has cloven hooves *and* chews the cud is considered fit to eat. Cows, lamb, moose, and deer are fine; rabbits and pigs are not. Why not eat pig? Because it's one of the filthiest animals around. It will eat anything you throw its way, and as a result, it is often laden with disease.

Among the fish, anything with fins and scales is considered clean. Salmon, trout and halibut are fine; catfish, eels, shellfish and crustaceans are not, because they're the scavengers of the sea. Shrimp and shellfish, for example, are known to feast on raw sewage and dead bodies. They were designed to filter poisons out of the sea, which is why they can be so lethal to those who eat them.