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WHEN EATING FLESH BECOMES SIN



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GOD HAS A TIME

To every [thing there is] a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: (Ecclesiastes 3:1)

Scripture has informed us that there is a time when something may be appropriate and right to do, and another time when it would not be good to do it. An example of this fact may be seen in the way the Israelites were instructed to observe the Passover.

Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel. (Exodus 12:15)

Leaven was allowed any other time, but during the feast of unleavened bread, it was strictly forbidden on pain of death.

Another example we can find in the Scripture of this principle is in the way the Israelites were to observe the Day of Atonement. On this day, they were to afflict the soul, which was understood to mean they were to abstain from eating entirely.

*Also on the tenth [day] of this seventh month [there shall be] a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall **afflict your souls**, and offer an of-*

*fering made by fire unto the LORD. (Leviticus 23:27)
For whatsoever soul [it be] that shall not be afflicted in
that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people.
(Leviticus 23:29)*

That they understood the command to “afflict the soul” to include a fast, is seen in the fact that in later years, the Day of Atonement came to be called “the Fast”.

*Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because **the fast** was now already past, Paul admonished them,” (Acts 27:9)*

Furthermore, we see the association between fasting and afflicting the soul, in the following verse.

*Then I proclaimed a **fast** there, at the river of Ahava, that we might **afflict** ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance. (Ezra 8:21)*

It was to be a day set apart to do the work of self examination that is outlined in the following Scripture:

Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? (2Corinthians 13:5)

These Hebrew laws concerning sacrifices and feast days are called in Hebrews 10:1, “a shadow of good things to

come”. We also refer to them as types. They represented different events in the plan for our redemption. For example: the sacrificial Lamb represented Christ, while the feast of Passover represented the event and date of His crucifixion. The thing or event represented by the shadow or type, we refer to as the “Antitype”.

On the Day of Atonement, services were performed that signified the removal of sin from the sinner.

For on that day shall [the priest] make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, [that] ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD. (Leviticus 16:30)

The apostle Peter spoke of the antitypical Day of Atonement as the time for the blotting out of sins (Acts 3:19). In Jesus’ letter to the church representing those living shortly before the antitypical Day of Atonement, He promises to the overcomer that his name will not be blotted out. The Hebrews rightfully regarded the Day of Atonement as signifying the day of judgment.

The antitype of this day then, would be the real time of judgment, when, as the record books are examined, either our sins will be blotted out, or our names. The sins blotted out are only those that have been confessed, repented of and put away. How important then that we have clear minds to discern sin in our lives, and participate in the work mentioned previously of afflicting the

soul, of examining ourselves.

Concerning the meaning of this Day of Atonement fast for us today, Seventh-day Adventist pioneer, Stephen Haskell observed:

*The antitypical day of atonement covers a period of years. In the type there was a **fast** of twenty-four hours required. During this one day there was to be complete control of the appetite; and it was a **type of the self-control to be exercised during the antitypical period of years**. God designs that His people shall be masters of their appetites, and keep under the body. Satan would give loose rein to the appetite, and let it control the person. (S. N. Haskell, *Christ In His Sanctuary* p 223, 1914)*

The Scriptures make reference to the antitypical Day of Atonement in connection to this self control in the area of diet, in a prophecy in Isaiah, which we will examine more closely, but first lets consider the following. The Bible outlines at least seven different dietary eras in the history of God's people. Different diets are prescribed for these different periods of time. The diet prescribed for this antitypical Day of Atonement is one of those time periods.

ERA 1 – FRUITS, NUTS, GRAINS, SEEDS



Man's original diet that was prescribed in the Garden of Eden consisted of Fruits, nuts, grains, and and other seeds.

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.” (Genesis 1:29)

ERA 2 – HERBS ADDED AFTER SIN

The diet God prescribed for man after sin, was expanded to include vegetables.



Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;” (Genesis 3:18)

ERA 3 – FLESH ALLOWED BUT NO BLOOD



The third dietary era began just after the flood, when every living plant had been destroyed. To meet the emer-

gency, God enlarged man's diet to include flesh. This allowance was also for the purpose of giving an illustration of the plan of redemption in harmony with the sacrificial system, already being practiced (which was later expanded and given in more detail in the days of Moses). This is seen in the restriction included with the license to eat flesh.

Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things. 4 But flesh with the life thereof, [which is] the blood thereof, shall ye not eat.” (Genesis 9:3-4)

They were prohibited from eating the blood, because it was a symbol of the life. And it was with the blood that atonement was to be made.

“For the life of the flesh [is] in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it [is] the blood [that] maketh an atonement for the soul.” (Leviticus 17:11)

ERA 4 – MANNA, VEGETARIAN

The fourth dietary era began when God delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage. God gave the Israelites virtually a vegetarian diet, with the one exception of portions of sacrificial animals.

And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited; they did eat manna, until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan.” (Exodus 16:35)

But there is a lesson we can learn from the attitude of the people in response to the diet God miraculously provided for them.

And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, [and] when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger. (Exodus 16:3)

Just a month after Israel had left Egypt, their provisions were getting low. They began to wonder where they were going to get food in the wilderness. But they did not desire just any food. They especially wanted flesh. God in mercy, provided them with quail that evening, and in the morning, He began raining Manna upon them, which He continued to do for forty years.

But an incident which happened just one year later showed that it was not simply the fear of starvation that prompted their complaints. They also had an intense desire for flesh.

“And the mixt multitude that [was] among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick: But now our soul [is] dried away: [there is] nothing at all, beside this manna, [before] our eyes.” (Numbers 11:4-6)

God was not pleased with them. The first time they had lusted for flesh, God had excused them realizing that they may be worried about going hungry and they had just come out of slavery and were not familiar with his dealings with them yet, and it would take some time to strengthen their faith in Him. But this time was different. They had been receiving Manna for a year. They were not afraid of going hungry. Now it was just a dissatisfaction with the food God provided. There was no excuse this time. Now it revealed a rebellious heart. This time God dealt with their murmurings in a signal manner.

“And while the flesh [was] yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the LORD was kindled against the people, and the LORD smote the people with a very great plague. And he called the name of that place Ki-brothhattaavah: because there they buried the people that lusted.” (Numbers 11:33-34)

Commenting on the same instance, David tells us:

“So they did eat, and were well filled: for he gave them their own desire; They were not estranged from their lust. But, while their meat [was] yet in their mouths, the wrath of God came upon them, and slew the fattest of them, and smote down the chosen [men] of Israel.” (Psalms 78:29-31)

We learn the lesson here, that sometimes God gives us what we desire even though He knows it is not best for us.

ERA 5 – FLESH



God foresaw that when Israel would enter Canaan, they would continue to lust after flesh. Because of this lust, because of their unhappiness with the diet that God had chosen for them, God consented to give them their own desire, that is, after entering Canaan, they could eat flesh.

When the LORD thy God shall enlarge thy border, as he hath promised thee, and thou shalt say, I will eat flesh,

because thy soul longeth to eat flesh; thou mayest eat flesh, whatsoever thy soul lusteth after.” (Deuteronomy 12:20)

However, this permission was qualified by certain restrictions. Blood was still prohibited, as well as fat.

“Only be sure that thou eat not the blood: for the blood [is] the life; and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh.” (Deuteronomy 12:23)

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

There was also a limitation placed upon what kind of animals they were allowed to eat. They were restricted to what God called, “Clean Animals”, among which were the sacrificial animals. These were described in detail in passages in Deuteronomy and Leviticus. Here is an example of one of the restrictions.

“Thou shalt not eat any abominable thing. These [are] the beasts which ye shall eat: the ox, the sheep, and the goat,” (Deuteronomy 14:3-4)

I believe this is one of the times God was referring to in the following passage.

“Wherefore I gave them also statutes [that were] not good, and judgments whereby they should not live;” (Ezekiel 20:25)

God granted permission for them to eat flesh, and gave laws restricting their diet at that time to just certain kinds of flesh, but not because it was good for them or because that was His will. He did it by permission, because of their rebellion, because of the stubbornness of their hearts, because of their lust for flesh. God calls these statutes, “not good”, “whereby they should not live”.

Even during this period when flesh was allowed, there were some who saw beyond God’s permission and realized and followed God’s perfect will. Daniel and his three friends were so determined to be vegetarian, that they risked the displeasure of the king and even their lives, in order to remain true to their dietary convictions.

“But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.” (Daniel 1:8)

Daniel was able to arrange for a trial period to test their dietary regimen.

“Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink.” (Daniel 1:12)

At the end of the ten day trial, the evidence showed clearly that their preferences were superior in every way, so they were allowed to continue their regimen.

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. (Daniel 1:15)

ERA 7 – FRUIT, NUTS, GRAINS, SEEDS



We will skip to era seven which is our diet in heaven and the new earth, and then come back to era six, because era six is the time in which we live and we need to spend more time discussing it.

“In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, [was there] the tree of life, which bare twelve [manner of] fruits, [and] yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree [were] for the healing of the nations.” (Revelation 22:2)

“And they shall build houses, and inhabit [them]; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.” (Isaiah 65:21)

The verses just quoted show that our diet in heaven will consist at least of fruits and leaves. The following verse shows us that there will be no killing of animals in heaven. No flesh will be eaten, even by animals we consider here to be carnivorous animals.

*“The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust [shall be] the serpent’s meat. They shall **not hurt nor destroy** in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD.” (Isaiah 65:25)*

ERA 6 – VEGETARIAN DIET



Era six is introduced in a prophecy of Isaiah with the words:

*“And in **that day** did the Lord GOD of hosts call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding*

*with sackcloth: And behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine: let us eat and drink; for to morrow we shall die. And it was revealed in mine ears by the LORD of hosts, Surely this iniquity shall **not be purged** from you till ye die, saith the Lord GOD of hosts.” (Isaiah 22:12-14)*

This tells us that at a specific time, which God calls, “that day”, God calls for weeping, and for mourning, an afflicting of the soul. This is Day of Atonement language.

But instead of afflicting the soul, the prophecy depicts a slaughtering of oxen and sheep (clean animals), and eating their flesh and drinking wine (a fermented beverage). This is said to be an iniquity (sin), but not just any sin, but one which was so grievous that it could not be “purged” or cleansed, or made atonement for, till “ye die”, or resulting in death. That is pretty serious. It is similar to prohibitions concerning the use of leaven during the feast of unleavened bread. A close study of the passage and its context reveals that this is speaking of the era that we are living in, the antitypical Day of Atonement.

First lets look at the broad context of Isaiah 22 by looking at the surrounding chapters.

“The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again.” (Isaiah 24:20)

Isaiah chapter 24 is speaking of the end times. Chapter 25 also is speaking of end times.

He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it. (9) And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation. (Isaiah 25:8, 9)

Chapter 26 is also speaking of End Times.

“Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.” (Isaiah 26:20-21)

But turning back to the immediate Context of Isaiah 22:12-14, our text in question, we will see that it is speaking of end times as well, and more specifically of the antitypical Day of Atonement. Notice the description given of **“that day”**.

*“And it shall come to pass in **that day**, that I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah: And I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I*

will commit thy government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah. (Isaiah 22:20-21)

That this is a reference to Christ under the symbol of Eliakim, is evidenced by the following facts.

- Eliakim was over the house (Isaiah 36:3) just as Christ is said to be over His house (Hebrews 3:6).
- The government is said to be committed to Eliakim, but that never happened with the literal Eliakim. However, Scripture tells us the government is placed upon Christ (Isaiah 9:6).
- It is stated that Eliakim would be a Father to Israel, but there is no evidence that the literal Eliakim ever became a “father” to any portion of Israel. However, Scripture tells us Christ is the everlasting Father (Isaiah 9:6) of His children.

Isaiah 22 continues:

*And the **key** of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open. And I will fasten him [as] a nail in a sure place; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house.” (Isaiah 22:22-23)*

This Scripture gives further evidence that Eliakim is a representative of Christ. Notice these points.

- Verse 23 quoted above says, Eliakim would be a glorious throne, but the literal Eliakim, son of Hilkiyah, never became a king at all. This must be speaking of Christ, whom David prophesied would sit on his throne (Acts 2:29, 30) (Years later, another Eliakim was made king and his name changed to Jehoiakim, but his rule was just 11 years and he did evil, and never became “glorious” in any sense.
- Eliakim is said to be a nail in a sure place, but there is nothing in Scripture to indicate that the literal Eliakim ever became such a “nail in a sure (faithful) place”, but Christ certainly can be said to be a “nail in a sure place”.
- Two verses further, in a prophecy that is commonly accepted to be a prophecy of Christ, in Isaiah 22:25, it speaks of this same nail in a sure place”, being cut down and falling. This never happened to Hilkiyah, but it certainly happened to Christ when he was crucified.
- The key of the house of David, was never placed upon Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah, but it is being placed upon Christ (see below - Revelation 3:7, 8)
- We find nothing else in Scripture telling us of Eliakim opening or shutting anything, but we find a clear reference to Christ in Revelation 3:7, 8 having the key of the house of David and opening and shutting using almost the identical wording that is used in Isaiah 22:22

“And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the

key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.” (Revelation 3:7-8)

This opening and shutting of doors refers to the opening of the door to the Most Holy Place, and the closing of the door to the Holy Place, for Revelation speaks of just two doors, both in heaven, and both in the heavenly sanctuary. One is the door into the Holy Place (Revelation 4:1, 5), and the other is the door into the Most Holy Place (Revelation 11:19). When the ministration of the priest closes in the Holy Place, it may be said that its door is closed. When the ministration of the priest in the Most Holy Place begins, the door may be said to be open. The fact that these doors are seen in the heavenly sanctuary, and that Christ is depicted as the priest in Revelation, reveals that these Scriptures are prophesying of the antitypical, the real events, and not simply the shadowy types. For Christ is the “minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man” (Hebrews 8:2). And, He is ministering there, “Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood...” (Hebrews 9:12)

Lets look once again at our passage in question.

*“And in **that day** did the Lord GOD of hosts call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding*

*with sackcloth: And behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine: let us eat and drink; for to morrow we shall die. And it was revealed in mine ears by the LORD of hosts, Surely this iniquity shall **not be purged** from you till ye die, saith the Lord GOD of hosts.” (Isaiah 22:12-14)*

CONCLUSION

We have seen strong evidence that this passage is speaking of the antitypical Day of Atonement, which a study of Daniel chapters 8 and 9 reveals began in 1844 and will extend to the close of human probation. Thus the message in this passage is that eating even “clean” flesh in the time we are now living in, the antitypical day of atonement, is sin. And if we continue after the light comes to us, when Christ leaves the Most Holy Place of the Heavenly Sanctuary, it will be impossible to be forgiven. For then, we will need to stand in the sight of a holy God without a mediator. Furthermore, this is the time of the judgment when our eternal destiny is being decided. It is impossible to have the fine discernment necessary to see sin and even the moral stamina to put it away while eating flesh. There are few who realize as they should how much their habits of diet have to do with their character, their usefulness in this world, and their eternal destiny.

As we saw earlier in this study, on the typical Day of Atonement the people were required to afflict their souls,

which included a fast (abstinence from food). It was typical of a health reform in our time, especially highlighted by a vegetarian diet. In these last days, God is especially seeking to direct our attention to the laws of health, for they are the laws of God just as much as moral law is. Thus a willful violation of these laws is sin. If flesh was ever healthy, it is certainly not now when disease is accumulating rapidly and chemicals and artificial hormones are concentrated in the flesh of animals.

Ro 8:22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

We have also seen that the original diet did not include flesh. God did not desire for us to have to kill a living creature in order to eat. Killing and eating flesh, has an effect upon the character, and in heaven, and in the new earth, “they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain” (Isaiah 5:25). God did allow the eating of flesh at certain times, and we have seen why. But the time we are living in, is not one of those times. We are on the borders of the heavenly Canaan and we need to be preparing for it.

To every [thing there is] a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: (Ecclesiastes 3:1)

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