

In a press conference on Wednesday, New York Governor, Andrew Cuomo said: “If you didn’t eat the cheesecake, you wouldn’t have a weight problem.” This is an old variation of the phrase “You are what you eat.” When we eat healthy, we feel good. Of course, native ancestors figured this out tens of thousands of years ago. “Traditional Alaska Native foods are some of the healthiest foods in the world. Moose and caribou meat are high in protein and low in saturated fat. Alaskan wild blueberries have more antioxidants than cultivated blueberries. Three ounces of bearded seal meat has 14mg of iron in it, 80% of the recommended daily value... Seal oil, a cultural favorite, is an excellent source of omega-3 fatty acids, which aids in heart and mental health.”ⁱ

In the Book of Revelation, an angel told John to eat a small scroll. He said to me, “Take and swallow it. It will turn your stomach sour, but in your mouth it will taste as sweet as honey.” (Rev 10:9). Sure enough, that which tasted sweet as honey turned sour in the stomach. There are several ways we can understand this teaching.

- In the context of the Book of Revelation, “The small scroll was sweet because it predicted the final victory of God’s people; it was sour because it also announced their sufferings” (Rev 10-9-10 footnote).
- There is a similar verse in the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel. “Son of man, eat what you find here: eat this scroll, then go, speak to the house of Israel” (3:1). God was warning the prophet that when he went to tell the people what was on God’s heart, the people would be rebellious and that would turn the prophet’s stomach sour. “The house of Israel will refuse to listen to you, since they refuse to listen to me. For the whole house of Israel is stubborn of brow and hard of heart” (3:7).

God offers us what is good and holy and lifegiving. The devil, the master deceiver, will always take something good and make it look bad. Likewise, he will take something that is bad for us and deceive us into thinking that we should really go all out to get it. In the Garden of Eden, he deceived Adam and Eve into eating the forbidden fruit. In their pride, believing the lies of the devil, they committed the original sin and lost paradise. Let’s look at a few other examples:

- Jesus teaches us that the truth will set us free. Certainly, he is the way, the truth and the life and in his sacrifice on the cross, he died to set us free from sin. (Jn 14:6). So, we should always guard our speech to be truthful. The devil encourages us to gossip. What may taste like honey for the gossiper, can really create a sour stomach for the person who is the subject of slander, lies, and other efforts to drag their character through the mud.
- Jesus teaches us to be generous with our time and talent and treasure and to do what we can to help others in need. When the wine ran out at the wedding feast of Cana, he took water and turned it into the choicest of wines. The devil encourages us to be selfish and not to care for others. In the parable of the Good Samaritan, the priest and Levite, leave the man in his pain and suffering and go on their merry way. The sour stomach will come when we are judged on how we cared for others. Jesus tells us, “Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was ... ill and in prison, and you did not care for me” (Mt 25: 41, 43).

When we eat healthy, we feel good. When we do the right thing, we feel good to. This often involves sacrifice and suffering. We need to take a long-term view rather look for instant results. We need to strive to listen to God in all things. There we find truth, beauty, and goodness.

ⁱ <https://www.maniilaq.org/sigluaq/>