

Doctrinal Vegetarianism In the First Century

*“They [Nasareans] keep all the Jewish observances, but did not sacrifice or partake of animal flesh; rather, it was unlawful for them to eat meat or offer sacrifice with it.”
(Epiphanius, Panarion 18:1:4)*

[Epiphanius lists these “Nasareans” as one of “seven Jewish sects” that existed “before the incarnation of Christ in Judea and Jerusalem” (Pan. 14:1:1). They were probably a variety of Essenes.]

*In the Gospel that is in general use among them [the Ebionites] which is called "according to Matthew", which however is not whole and complete but forged and mutilated - they call it the Hebrews Gospel-it is reported... "It came to pass that John was baptizing; and there went out to him Pharisees and were baptized, and all of Jerusalem. And John had a garment of camel's hair and a leather girdle about his loins, and his food, as it is said, was wild honey, the taste if which was that of manna, as a cake dipped in oil. Thus they were resolved to pervert the truth into a lie and put a cake in the place of locusts.
(Epiphanius, Panarion 30.13.4-5)*

*...they [Ebionites] abandon the proper sequence of the words and pervert the saying, as is plain to all from the readings attached, and have let the disciples say: "'Where will you have us prepare the passover?' And him to answer to that: 'Do I desire with desire at this Passover to eat flesh with you?'"
(Epiphanius, Panarion 30.22.4)*

Who Were the Ebionites?

*“Next comes Ebion, the founder of the Ebionites. He held doctrines like those of the Nazarenes...being from their sect, although what he taught and proclaimed differed from what they did...”
(Epiphanius; Panarion 30:1:1)*

*“Their sect began after the capture of Jerusalem. For when all those who believed in Messiah settled at that time for the most part in Peraea, in a city called Pella ... that provided an opportunity for Ebion. ... They (Nazarenes and Ebionites) do in fact differ from each other...”
(Epiphanius; Panarion 30:2:7)*

There is One Who Judges All Days (Rom. 14:5)

XII. (42) *The law sets down every day as a festival*, adapting itself to an irreproachable life, as if men continually obeyed nature and her injunctions. And if wickedness did not prosper, subduing by their predominant influence all those reasonings about what things might be expedient, which they have driven out of the soul of each individual, but if all the powers of the virtues remained in all respects unsubdued, ***then the whole time from a man's birth to his death would be one uninterrupted festival***, and all houses and every city would pass their time in continual fearlessness and peace, being full of every imaginable blessing, enjoying perfect tranquillity. (43) But, as it is at present, covetousness and the system of mutual hostility and retaliation with which both men and women are continually forming designs against one another, and even against themselves, have destroyed the continuity of cheerfulness and happiness. And the proof of what I have just asserted is visible to all men; (44) for all those men, whether among the Greeks or among the barbarians, who are practisers of wisdom, living in a blameless and irreproachable manner, determining not to do any injustice, nor even to retaliate it when done to them, shunning all association with busy-bodies, in all the cities which they inhabit, avoid all courts of justice, and council halls, and market-places, and places of assembly, and, in short, every spot where any band or company of precipitate headstrong men is collected, (45) admiring, as it were, a life of peace and tranquillity, being the most devoted contemplators of nature and of all the things in it. Investigating earth and sea, and the air, and the heaven, and all the different natures in each of them; dwelling, if one may so say, in their minds, at least, with the moon, and the sun, and the whole company of the rest of the stars, both planets and fixed stars. Having their bodies, indeed, firmly planted on the earth, but having their souls furnished with wings, in order that thus hovering in the air they may closely survey all the powers above, looking upon them as in reality the most excellent of cosmopolites, who consider the whole world as their native city, and all the devotees of wisdom as their fellow citizens, virtue herself having enrolled them as such, to whom it has been entrusted to frame a constitution for their common city.

XIII. (46) Being, therefore, full of all kinds of excellence, and being accustomed to disregard all those good things which affect the body and external circumstances, and being inured to look upon things indifferent as really indifferent, and being armed by study against the pleasures and appetites, and, in short, being always labouring to raise themselves above the passions, and being instructed to exert all their power to pull down the fortification which those appetites have built up, and being insensible to any impression which the attacks of fortune might make upon them, because they have previously estimated the power of its attacks in their anticipations (for anticipation makes even those things light which would be most terrible if unexpected), their minds in this manner calculating that nothing that happens is wholly strange, but having a kind of faint perception of everything as old and in some degree blunted. These men, being very naturally rendered cheerful by their virtues, pass ***the whole of their lives as a festival***. (47) These men, however, are therefore but a small number, kindling in their different

cities a sort of spark of wisdom, in order that virtue may not become utterly extinguished, and so be entirely extirpated from our race. (48) But if men everywhere agreed with this small number, and became, as nature originally designed that they should, all blameless and irreproachable, lovers of wisdom, delighting in all that is virtuous and honourable, and thinking that and that alone good, and looking on everything else as subordinate and slaves, as if they themselves were the masters of them, then all the cities would be full of happiness, being wholly free from all the things which are the causes of pain or fear, and full of all those which produce joy and cheerfulness. ***So that no time would ever cease to be the time of a happy life, but that the whole circle of the year would be one festival.***

XIV. (49) Wherefore, if truth were to be the judge, no wicked or worthless man can pass a time of festival, no not even for the briefest period, inasmuch as he must be continually pained by the consciousness of his own iniquities, even though, with his soul, and his voice, and his countenance, he may pretend to smile; for how can a man who is full of the most evil counsels, and who lives with folly, have any period of genuine joy? A man who is in every respect unfortunate and miserable, in his tongue, and his belly, and all his other members, (50) since he uses the first for the utterance of things which ought to be secret and buried in silence, and the second he fills full of abundance of strong wine and immoderate quantities of food out of gluttony, and the rest of his members he uses for the indulgence of unlawful desires and illicit connections, not only seeking to violate the marriage bed of others, but lusting unnaturally, and seeking to deface the manly character of the nature of man, and to change it into a womanlike appearance, for the sake of the gratification of his own polluted and accursed passions. (51) On which account the all-great Moses, seeing the pre-eminence of the beauty of that which is the real festival, looked upon it as too perfect for human nature and dedicated it to God himself, speaking thus, in these very words: "The feast of the Lord." (52) In considering the melancholy and fearful condition of the human race, and how full it is of innumerable evils, which the covetousness of the soul begets, which the defects of the body produce, and which all the inequalities of the soul inflict upon us, and which the retaliations of those among whom we live, both doing and suffering innumerable evils, are continually causing us, he then wondered whether any one being tossed about in such a sea of troubles, some brought on deliberately and others unintentionally, and never being able to rest in peace nor to cast anchor in the safe haven of a life free from danger, could by any possibility really keep a feast, not one in name, but one which should really be so, enjoying himself and being happy in the contemplation of the world and all the things in it, and in obedience to nature, and in a perfect harmony between his words and his actions, between his actions and his words. (53) On which account he necessarily said that the feasts belonged to God alone; for he alone is happy and blessed, having no participation in any evil whatever, but being full of all perfect blessings. Or rather, if one is to say the exact truth, being himself the good, who has showered all particular good things over the heaven and earth. (Philo of Alexandria; On Special Laws 2:42-53)

“Rejoice, Goyim, with His people.”
(Romans 15:10; Deut. 32:43)
The Restoration of the Lost Ten Tribes
Many Gentiles Join Them

They shall come trembling as a bird out of Egypt—this refers to the generation of the wilderness—and as a dove out of the land of Assyria (Hos. XI, 11)—this refers to the ten tribes; and of both of them it says’ And I will make them to dwell in their houses, saith the Lord (ib.). Rabbi says: When a certain kind of dove is given food, the other doves smell it and flock to her cote. So when the elder sits and discourses, many strangers become proselytes at such a time; so, for instance, Jethro heard the news and came, Rahab heard and came. So through Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, many strangers became proselytes at that time. What is the reason? Because, when he seeth his children sanctify My name, then, as it goes on, they also that err in spirit shall come to understanding (Isa. XXIX, 23, 24).
(Song of Songs Rabbah IV:2)