

Eating Blood Forbidden

⁴ *The LORD said to Moses,* ² *“Speak to Aaron and his sons and to all the Israelites and say to them: ‘This is what the LORD has commanded: ³ Any Israelite who sacrifices an ox, a lamb or a goat in the camp or outside of it ⁴ instead of bringing it to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting to present it as an offering to the LORD in front of the tabernacle of the LORD—that man shall be considered guilty of bloodshed; he has shed blood and must be cut off from his people. ⁵ This is so the Israelites will bring to the LORD the sacrifices they are now making in the open fields. They must bring them to the priest, that is, to the LORD, at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting and sacrifice them as fellowship offerings. ⁶ The priest is to sprinkle the blood against the altar of the LORD at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting and burn the fat as an aroma pleasing to the LORD. ⁷ They must no longer offer any of their sacrifices to the goat idols to whom they prostitute themselves. This is to be a lasting ordinance for them and for the generations to come.’ ⁸ “Say to them: ‘Any Israelite or any alien living among them who offers a burnt offering or sacrifice ⁹ and does not bring it to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting to sacrifice it to the LORD—that man must be cut off from his people. ¹⁰ “Any Israelite or any alien living among them who eats any blood—I will set my face against that person who eats blood and will cut him off from his people. ¹¹ For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one’s life. ¹² Therefore I say to the Israelites, “None of you may eat blood, nor may an alien living among you eat blood.” ¹³ “Any Israelite or any alien living among you who hunts any animal or bird that may be eaten must drain out the blood and cover it with earth, ¹⁴ because the life of every creature is its blood. That is why I have said to the Israelites, “You must not eat the blood of any creature, because the life of every creature is its blood; anyone who eats it must be cut off.” (Leviticus 17:1-14)*

People cultures and habits vary from place to place and from country to country. The people habits and cultures vary in the way they eat, dress, speak, and the way they conduct their affairs. One of these food habits that we will deal with here is eating blood.

We need to understand why eating blood is forbidden and why God did not allow us to eat blood. In the above passage that we read God commanded all the Israelites not to sacrifice any animal outside the camp but to bring it to the priest at the entrance to the tent of meeting and sacrifice it there to the Lord, *“The priest is to sprinkle the blood against the altar of the LORD at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting and burn the fat as an aroma pleasing to the LORD.”* So the Lord wanted His people to bring the animals and sacrifice them to Him and not to idols, demons or other gods when they sacrifice them away from the tent of meeting. The blood of the animal must be sprinkled on the altar of the Lord; that is why they need to come to the entrance of the tent of meeting and sacrifice the animal there and not do it in the open field because that sacrifice should be to the Lord.

Why God is asking that the blood should be brought and sprinkled on the altar? Because the blood God had given to make atonement, *“it is the blood that makes atonement for one’s life.”*

Therefore now we clearly understand why eating blood is forbidden, because is given to make atonement. Therefore, *“Any Israelite or any alien living among them who eats any blood—I will set my face against that person who eats blood and will cut him off from his people. ¹¹ For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one’s life.”*

God had said the same to Noah, *“But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it.” (Genesis 9:4)* At the time of King Saul the people sinned against the Lord because they were so hungry by eating meat that has blood in it. *“That day, after the Israelites had struck down the Philistines from Micmash to Aijalon, they were exhausted. They pounced on the plunder and, taking sheep, cattle and calves, they butchered them on the ground and ate them, together with the blood. Then someone said to Saul, “Look, the men are sinning against the LORD by eating meat that has blood in it.” “You have broken faith,” he said. “Roll a large stone over here at once.” Then he said, “Go out among the men and tell them, ‘Each of you bring me your cattle and sheep, and slaughter them here and eat them. Do not sin against the LORD by eating meat with blood still in it.’” (1 Samuel 14:31-34)*

Shedding blood is important for the atonement and forgiveness of sins as we can read, *“This is why even the first covenant was not put into effect without blood. When Moses had proclaimed every commandment of the law to all the people, he took the blood of calves, together with water, scarlet wool and branches of hyssop, and sprinkled the scroll and all the people. He said, “This is the blood of the covenant, which God has commanded you to keep.” In the same way, he sprinkled with the blood both the tabernacle and everything used in its ceremonies. In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.” (Hebrews 9:18-22)* And *“because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said: “Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me.” (Hebrews 10:4-5) “He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption.” (Hebrews 9:12)*

From the above points we can grasp the importance of blood for the atonement and the forgiveness of sins and how finally God sent His Son to shed His blood for the forgiveness of our sins and to give us eternal redemption. And this is what the Lord said at the last supper, *“He took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.” (Luke 22:20)*

But some may say that Christ declared that all food is clean and we can eat blood as we can read here: *“Are you so dull?” he asked. “Don’t you see that nothing that enters a man from the outside can make him ‘unclean’? For it doesn’t go into his heart but into his stomach, and then out of his body.” (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods “clean.”) (Mark 7:18-19)* But one important point here; blood is not food and Jesus was speaking to the Jewish and He was telling them to consider the list of unclean food as clean and you can eat. But He never meant here eating blood is allowed because blood was never been considered as food, *“For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one’s life.” (Leviticus 17: 11)* In addition to that there are other Scripture in the New Testament that forbid eating blood as we can read below:

- 1- *“You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things.” (Acts 15:29)*
- 2- *“As for the Gentile believers, we have written to them our decision that they should abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality.” (Acts 21:25)*

My Dear and Beloved: We can see clearly the early church was adopting the teaching of not eating blood and that is what we need to do and practice in our lives as you agree to pray.

My Prayer: *Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus who died on the cross for my sins and rose from the dead on the third day to give me eternal life. Lord forgives me my sin in eating the blood of animal. Today I commit myself to abstain from eating blood and to teach others to do that in accordance to your word commands, this is my prayer in Jesus name Amen.*