

Abstaining from Blood

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The apostles were all Jews. Even Shaul, commonly known as Paul, that great apostle to the Gentiles, remained a Jew after he got saved. When the Gentiles first got infected by the Gospel and started getting saved as a result of his ministry, an argument arose among the believers as to whether or not these new Gentile believers were required to observe Torah for salvation the way that Jewish believers were, especially in the matter of circumcision. Some Jewish believers were claiming that Gentiles couldn't be saved unless they were circumcised. Such a dissension arose among the believers that the apostles decided to get together to consider the matter and try to reach a verdict.

We read of this momentous apostolic meeting in Acts chapter 15. After much debate, James, the head rabbi of the church voiced the common consensus for the apostles' instruction to the Gentiles:

For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.¹

So, here we have, in a nutshell, those Torah *mitzvot*² required of the Gentiles for salvation in addition to the requirements of heart-faith and mouth-confession in Jesus as Lord Messiah as set forth by Shaul in his proclamation of the good news to the Gentiles.³ Notice here that this ruling comes not only from the apostles, but also from the Holy Ghost, the very presence and power of God. As such, these salvation basics stand for time and for eternity.

As I look over these essential requirements imposed in the Holy Ghost upon all Gentile believers, I see a clear conflict between these Holy-Ghost commandments and the customary teaching among the so-called "Christian" churches throughout the centuries. The conflict is not so much over the issues of abstaining from idolatrized meat, from fornication, or

even from things strangled (since most “Christians” do not practice this form of slaughter). Rather the most obvious controversy between the Holy Ghost and the common Gentile church is over this issue of *abstaining from blood*.

I guarantee you that if it were possible to search the archives of church teachings over the past 1900 years for an instructive sermon regarding the Holy-Ghost command to abstain from blood, you would be hard-pressed to find even one sermon on this essential of Gentile (and Jewish) Messianic discipleship. Why is this so? The most likely reason is because most forms of Gentile Christianity got separated from the truth of the Word when they lost contact with the mother church after the siege of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple (may *HaShem*⁴ haste the day of the Millennial Temple). Almost 1900 years of darkness has blanketed the hearts and minds of the Gentiles regarding these issues, but this darkness began to lift in the 1960’s as *HaShem* began to pour out His spirit upon my people once again in preparation for the great end-time harvest.

So for almost 50 years, *HaShem* has been restoring his people with light of Torah knowledge and the riches of Torah are spilling over onto the Gentiles. In fact, the very purpose of my writing this article is to spread Torah upon the faces of my fellow Gentile believers in *Mashiach*.⁵ So, for objectives of salvation, I now impart unto you, my fellow believers, the truth of Torah that will set you free in the jubilee liberty of the Holy Ghost.

If we really want to walk in the *halakah*⁶ of the Spirit, we need to understand what the apostles were referring to when they gave commandment in the Holy Ghost for Gentile believers to *abstain from blood*. The most obvious answer pertains to the Jewish practice of not ingesting blood. So crucial was this command in the Torah that *HaShem* warns us that “Whatsoever soul it be that eateth any manner of blood, even that soul shall be cut off from his people.”⁷ This command applied not only to the house of Israel, but also to the foreigners sojourning among them and they too are warned of the consequence of being “cut off” from among their people if they partake of some manner of blood.⁸

It never ceases to amaze me when I hear some Catholic talk about receiving the actual blood of Christ in communion. What a travesty! This anti-Torah statement dishonors the true Table of the Lord. The very fact that these Gentile pretenders to faith can speak of the Lord’s Table in this manner shows me that they are either completely oblivious of the apostolic

command to abstain from blood or else they are outright rebelling against the apostles, the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Torah by their conscious and idolatrous perversion of the Lord's Table—truly shocking behavior for one who claims to be a “believer”! When will they ever realize that the Table of the Lord is ruled by and ever subservient to the mandates of the Life-Giving Torah, the Tree of Life?

Interestingly enough, we find the actual ingestion of animal blood practiced in largely Roman Catholic countries. Not even the Eastern Orthodox, who also claim to ingest Christ's blood, have reached this height of Torah transgression, but find it repugnant along with God's chosen people, the Jews. Nevertheless, in most Roman Catholic countries you will find several “delicacies” which use animal blood as one of their main ingredients. Two examples are blood sausage and blood pudding. The practice of eating such abominations as blood sausage and blood pudding are in flat contradiction to the Word of God. They are practices inherent in paganism and it should not surprise us that a “church” devoted to saint and image worship should also advocate the heathenistic practice of bloodfest. “Let me not eat of their dainties...”⁹

Now, many Protestants or non-Catholic pretenders to faith in Messiah who are reading this article are probably thinking that they are saved, having met the conditions set forth by the apostles in Acts 15 because they do not practice communion as an actual imbibing of Christ's blood nor do they eat blood sausage or blood pudding. I contend, however, that they are mistaken. Though they have met part of the requirement of abstaining from blood, they yet remain transgressors, having offended another requirement which they have failed to observe due either to their ignorance of the Torah or to their conscious rebellion against it. “My people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge”¹⁰ and “rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.”¹¹ But there is light, repentance, and salvation to be had through the Torah revelation of God.

Now that I have you on the edge of your seat, waiting to discover where you are lacking in your zeal for salvation, I will disclose to you the truth of the Word of God which will bring health to both body and soul. If you are a sincere pretender to faith in *Yeshua haMashiach*,¹² you will agree that idolatry is an abomination to the Lord. What you probably don't realize, however, is that the uncleanness of idolatry is often compared in Scripture to the uncleanness of menstruation.¹³

I can hear you now: “Rabbi Goldberg, are you talking about the *Menses Amendment*?” Actually, no. What I’m saying has indirect implications for the *Menses Amendment* which is a national move to get back to the principles of the Word of God, but what I’m addressing directly right now is the clear commandment given in the Holy Ghost through the apostles to all Gentile believers as a condition of salvation. They did not command fleshly circumcision for Gentile believers, but they did command, among other things, *abstention from blood*. Therefore, if you, as a Gentile believer in *Mashiach*, wish to be saved, you will want to know how to observe this apostolic, Holy-Ghost commandment in its fullness.

Now I know that what I’m about to share with you may not be popular, but it is, nevertheless the Word of God. I know that people and churches are doing a lot of things these days to appeal to the paganistic appetites of *Yetzer haRa*¹⁴ such as condoning homosexuality and the insubordination of women, but while they are making points with the masses, they are losing points with *HaShem*. I’m not writing this article to tickle your fancy or water down the Word of God. I’m writing this article to save your soul. “He that hath an ear, let him hear...”¹⁵

The commandment I’m about to share with you comes not only from the apostles in Jerusalem, but from *HaShem* Himself on Mount Sinai. It’s a part of the Torah that is given not only to fulfilled and unfulfilled Jews, but also to olive-grafted aliens to the covenant—that is, Gentile believers in *Mashiach Yeshua*. “If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken *it*.”¹⁶ “My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. For they *are* life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.”¹⁷

The other part of the apostolic command to abstain from blood is the Torah instruction concerning *niddah*. *Niddah* has to do with the quarantine of those infected by uncleanness as defined in the holiness code of the Torah. It has to do with holiness which means “separation.” Holiness involves separating oneself from the infection of uncleanness and if infected, separating oneself from the community so as not to infect others. Let me show you from the Torah exactly what I’m talking about:

If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood *shall be* upon them... And if a man shall take his sister, his father's daughter, or his mother's daughter, and see her nakedness, and she see his nakedness; *it is* a wicked thing; and they shall be cut off in the sight of their people: he hath uncovered his sister's nakedness; he shall bear his iniquity. And if a man shall lie with a woman having her sickness, and shall uncover her nakedness; he hath discovered her fountain, and she hath uncovered the fountain of her blood: and both of them shall be cut off from among their people.¹⁸

Notice here that the prohibition against a man discovering the fountain of a woman's blood when she is with her "sickness" occurs in the same passage prohibiting homosexual intercourse and incest. Notice also that in each of these cases, the death penalty is imposed. This punishment shows the gravity of each of these sins.

All three of these sins are also forbidden by the Holy-Ghost, apostolic rulings set forth in Acts 15. Homosexuality and incest are forbidden under the category of "fornication" and menstrual intercourse is forbidden by the command to abstain from blood. In each case, execution is prescribed for both partners in the fornication or bloodlust.

Menstruation is a result of the fall. It is a function of the sin nature inherited from our parents, Adam and *Chavah*.¹⁹ Consequently, it is something inherently shameful, an infectious symptom of our sinful nature for "in sin did my mother conceive me."²⁰ My own mother, of Sephardic ancestry, told me once that when she, at age 13, first started menstruating, she told her mother of her plight who responded by immediately slapping her. Why? Because menstruation is an object of shame among God's people, being akin to the sin of idolatry.

In Isaiah 64:6, we are told that "...we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags..." In the Hebrew, the word "filthy" actually means "menstrual," showing us how utterly unclean are our best good deeds due to the sinfulness of our fallen nature. The Prophet Ezekiel tells us how true righteousness and salvation depend on the avoidance of contact with a menstruating woman. He writes,

...the soul that sinneth, it shall die. But if a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right, *And* hath not...come near to a menstruous woman...and hath kept my judgments, to deal truly; he *is* just, he shall surely live, saith the Lord GOD.”²¹

Under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, the apostles at their meeting in Jerusalem in Acts 15, commanded Gentile believers to abstain from blood, including not only the ingestion of blood, but any kind of contact with the blood of a menstruous woman. They didn’t command circumcision for the Gentiles, but they did reiterate the Torah commandments concerning blood.

I want to point out here that the command to abstain from blood is not a suggestion. Neither is it given simply for health reasons, though there surely are health benefits involved, as some medical research has shown, due to the presence of menotoxins in a menstruating woman. Rather, abstaining from blood is essential to true righteousness and “holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.”²²

So how can a believing husband and wife observe the Holy-Ghost command to abstain from blood? First of all, they must, according to another command of Scripture, avoid the very appearance of evil.²³ Some ancient rabbis forbade a menstruating woman to put on make-up or jewelry lest she lead herself and another man into the abomination of menstrual intercourse. The Word of God gives other regulations regarding menstruation which serve to protect both male and female from slipping into the sin of bloodlust:

And if a woman have an issue, *and* her issue in her flesh be blood, she shall be put apart seven days... And whosoever toucheth her bed shall wash his clothes, and bathe *himself* in water, and be unclean until the even. And whosoever toucheth any thing that she sat upon shall wash his clothes, and bathe *himself* in water, and be unclean until the even... But if she be cleansed of her issue, then she shall number to herself seven days, and after that she shall be clean... Thus shall ye separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness; that they die not in their uncleanness, when they defile my tabernacle that *is* among them.²⁴

To avoid contamination with menstrual blood, no physical contact may occur with a menstruating woman. No touching, no kissing, no holding hands, no contact with a place or items where a menstruating woman has been present.

As a Jewish man, Yeshua was subservient to the Torah. John tells us that He “tabernacled” among us.²⁵ He was the Tabernacle, the true Tabernacle, which *HaShem* pitched and not man.²⁶ By touching the fringe of Yeshua’s *tallit*, his prayer shawl, the unclean woman with the issue of blood defiled the Tabernacle of *HaShem*. Nevertheless, instead of dying, she was healed of the issue of blood from which she had suffered for twelve years.²⁷ Why healing, when the Torah specifically warns us of dying in uncleanness for defiling the tabernacle of *HaShem*?

What Yeshua shows us here is that the essential spirit of the Torah command concerning menstrual blood is the prohibition against menstrual intercourse. The other regulations concerning menstrual blood are simply precautionary, preventive measures to help men and women to resist the temptation of menstrual intercourse. The Holy-Ghost, apostolic command given to Gentile believers prohibits menstrual intercourse, but it does not enforce all of the Torah regulations regarding defilement through touching contaminated items and the required immersion in the bath of the mikveh for cleansing. These further commands which are simply preventative measures and matters of Jewish identity and ritual purity are imposed only upon Jewish believers and Jewish unbelievers.

I can hear some believer piping up just now: “But Rabbi Goldberg, you’re preaching the letter of the Law...”

That is not my intent. The desire of my spirit-man is to teach the Spirit of the Torah in Holy-Ghost newness and liberty for the salvation and healing of souls and bodies. What matters most is the heart. That’s why the Torah itself distinguishes between those who accidentally engage in menstrual intercourse and those who intentionally do so. We have already seen that the penalty for intentional menstrual intercourse is death to both partners. However, with regard to those who do so accidentally, the Torah does not say that they will be “cut off,” but simply “if any man lie with her at all, and her flowers be upon him, he shall be unclean seven days...”²⁸ Clearly, such an accidental case of intercourse with a menstruating woman

is treated simply as a matter of ritual impurity rather than a grave, immoral offense.

Conscience plays a primary role in this whole matter. With respect to things sacrificed to idols, the Apostle Shaul tells us to ask no question for conscience sake. In other words, don't pry into finding out whether your hosts got the meat from an idolatrous feast or not, but just eat it, giving thanks to *HaShem*. But if you happen to find out that it is offered to idols, don't partake for the sake of conscience.²⁹ So also, just as in the case of meat sacrificed to idols, there is a "don't ask, don't tell" policy regarding sexual intercourse when one of the spouses is unsaved. But then again, if both are saved, it is the responsibility of the believing wife to tell her believing husband when she is with the rag. However, if the wife is not a believer, the husband need not ask her if she is with it or not and may simply partake thereof with thanksgiving. However, if you become aware of her fountain at any point, you must desist immediately in order to avoid sinning against conscience. As you can see the same rules of conscience apply in regard to abstaining from blood as apply to eating things sacrificed to idols—a thing also forbidden by the apostles in Jerusalem.

To those married couples under my spiritual authority, I recommend using the rhythm of the menstrual cycle to provide a natural regularity to their prayer and fasting, taking care to be joined again conjugally, "that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency."³⁰ I call this menstrual regulation of prayer and fasting "the rhythm of salvation." I teach these things publically without shame because as saith the Word of God, so teach I.

A quick word about the *Menses Amendment*: I wholeheartedly support the *Menses Amendment* and everything it stands for. It is truly a sign of revival and of the beaming forth of the light of Torah revelation in our day. I pray that it may prevail and open the wells of salvation to both Jew and Gentile not only in this great country of the United States of America, but around the globe and especially in the Land of Promise, the Israel of God. 

¹ Acts 15:28-29.

² *mitzvot* means "commandments."

³ Rom 10:9.

⁴ *HaShem* means “The Name” and refers to the Almighty. It substitutes in for the Divine Name as a show of respect.

⁵ that is, Messiah.

⁶ *Halakah* is the practical application of the Word in daily life.

⁷ Lev. 7:27.

⁸ Lev 17:10.

⁹ Ps 141:4.

¹⁰ Hos 4:6.

¹¹ I Sam 15:23.

¹² that is, Jesus Christ.

¹³ For example, Ezek 36:17 among others.

¹⁴ that is, the urge to do evil which is inherent in our sin nature.

¹⁵ Rev 2:11.

¹⁶ Is 1:19-20.

¹⁷ Prov 4:20-22.

¹⁸ Lev 20: 13, 17-18.

¹⁹ that is, Eve.

²⁰ Ps 51:5.

²¹ Ezek 18:4-6.

²² Heb 12:14.

²³ I Thess 5:22.

²⁴ Lev 15:19, 21-22, 28, 31.

²⁵ Jn 1:14; the word “dwelt” is so rendered by some translators.

²⁶ Heb 8:2.

²⁷ Mk 5:25-34.

²⁸ Lev 15:24.

²⁹ I Cor 10:25-30.

³⁰ I Cor 7:5.