

Leviticus 7:22-27 – Blood and Fat: What you need to know!

TSK, Gill, Edersheim, Schultz, Poythress, Cowman, Trapp, Poole, Geneva, Clarke, Barnes, HebrewLexicon, Bonar, Bush, Henry, TSK, Delitzsch, Eclectic, Handfuls, Beloved in Christ: We've gone through the 5 offerings: the burnt, thanksgiving, fellowship, sin, and trespass, and we want to get to the **strange priestly clothes**, the **3 Great Feasts**, the **tabernacle and temple**, and **other symbolic things of the OT**. But before we get there, we have to consider God's instruction concerning fat and blood.

Our headings are:

Fat

Blood

Our goals are: That you will recognize what belongs to the Lord in life and in worship and give him what belongs to him.

Fat

22 And the **LORD spoke** to Moses, saying, 23 "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: '**You shall not eat any fat**, of ox or sheep or goat. 24 'And the fat of an animal that dies naturally, and the fat of what is torn by wild beasts, **may be used in any other way**; but you shall by no means eat it. 25 'For **whoever eats the fat of the animal** of which men offer an offering made by fire to the LORD, the person who eats it **shall be cut off** from his people.

1. God spoke these words and Moses wrote them down, so they are authoritative and you must not question them.

2. God told the Jews there were not to eat the fat of animals.

- a. They were not to eat the fat of **any of the sacrificial offerings** – cows, sheep or goats.
- b. They were not to eat the fat of animals **that were killed by wild animals**.
- c. They were not to eat the fat of animals **that died naturally**.
- d. They were not to eat the fat of animals that **they killed for their food**. You see this confirmed in Verse 26.

3. This did not mean the Jews were required to eliminate all fat from their diet.

That was impossible. **There is fat between most muscle**. The fat to which God was referring was the **large globes of fat**, like the fat on the kidneys, that was burnt to God. (The body needs a certain amount of fat.)

4. The fat from some of these animals, like the ones killed for food, could be used for different things, like for fuel.

So the Jews were not banned from using the fat; they just were not permitted to eat it.

5. The one who ate the fat of the special offerings was cut off from among God's people.

This meant **the person who ate fat was excommunicated** from God's people—denied the blessings of the covenant. While it is possible that "cut off from his people" meant execution, only context tells that. In this context we know those who ate fat could make atonement for their sins. So they were not physically executed but were excluded from God's people.

6. Why was this such a big deal that God would forbid the Jews from eating fat?

a. Fat is unhealthy to eat, especially in large amounts. Fat contains many diseases. There is little blood flow in fat to clean it. But that was not the main reason God forbade the eating of fats.

b. The fat of the sacrifices was reserved for God as part of the ceremonial system. And if God claimed something to be his (and he was pleased with fat offerings), the Jews were not to touch it. **There was separation between God and man – between the secular and the sacred.**

c. What about the fat of animals that were not part of the sacrificial system – like those animals slaughtered for food, killed by wild animals, or died naturally? Pagans had the custom of eating fats of sacrifices they made to their gods and the Lord wanted to teach the difference between his people and pagans. Didn't the **Lord use other things to teach separation of his people from the world?** In order to teach separation between God's holy people and Gentiles, God forbade the Jews from eating pork. **There was nothing intrinsically wrong with eating pork, Peter confirmed this in Acts, but this law served to teach the distinction between Jews and Gentiles.** Also, Levites were not allowed to drink alcohol, but now all are allowed to do so!

7. Lessons:

a. There is no "little" sin to God. Even eating of fat was serious enough to bring judgment, ultimately to excommunication from God's covenant people. If you become overly familiar with God and treat him disrespectfully, you anger him.

b. More specifically, there are certain things that belong to God that you must not touch: His Son, his sacraments, his Word, his church, his ecclesiastical structure, his command to civil authorities, his order in the home, and most specifically, his worship. So just as the Jews could not eat the fat for the offering, you are not to touch anything that belongs to the Lord.

c. So, should you eat fat today? Remember 2 things. **First**, remember God forbade the Jews from eating the fat as that was part of the offerings he required for himself. But you don't have to make sacrifices today because Jesus was your sacrifice. God doesn't want sacrifices of bulls. You offer Jesus. So if the reality is here, the symbolic things must go. **Second**, the eating of fat of non-sacrifice animals in the daily life of the Jews was forbidden to teach the distinction between Jews and Gentiles. The Jews gave their fat to God; the Gentiles ate theirs. Today, with the principle of the sacrifice fulfilled with Jesus being your true sacrifice, the **distinction between Jews and Gentiles is no longer shown by not eating fat**, but by giving your best to God. This means eating fat is permitted. **Enjoy your bacon. Just don't cook it when you have your Muslim friends over.**

d. While eating fat is not sinful, consuming large amounts of fat is harmful and therefore sinful.

e. Don't condemn others for what they eat. (Lard was butter for those who had nothing.) There are bigger issues. Romans 14.

Blood

26 'Moreover you shall not eat any blood **in any of your dwellings**, whether of bird or beast. 7 'Whoever eats any blood, that person shall be cut off from his people.'

1. God explicitly said the Jews were not allowed to eat any blood.

a. Jews were not to eat the blood of the any of the sacrifices to God (cows, sheep, goats, pigeons, or doves).

That blood of the animal sacrifices was always poured out or sprinkled to symbolize cleansing.

b. Jews were not to eat the blood of those 5 animals even if they weren't being sacrificed but were killed for food.

Moses later reconfirmed this in very direct language. And he draws it back to the sacrifices

Leviticus 17:10 'And whatever man of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell among you, **who eats any blood, I will set My face against that person who eats blood, and will cut him off** from among his people. 11 '**For the life of the flesh is in the blood**, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; **for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.**' 12 'Therefore I said to the children of Israel, '**No one among you shall eat blood, nor shall any stranger who dwells among you eat blood.**'

Later, blood eating was again confirmed as a sin when King Saul caused his soldiers to starve.

1Samuel 14:32 And the people rushed on the spoil, and took sheep, oxen, and calves, and slaughtered them on the ground; and **the people ate them with the blood**. 33 Then they told Saul, saying, "**Look, the people are sinning against the LORD by eating with the blood!**"

c. Jews were not to eat the blood of other clean animals that were not part of the sacrificial system – deer, etc.

Deuteronomy 12:15 "However, you **may slaughter and eat meat within all your gates, whatever your heart desires**, according to the blessing of the LORD your God which He has given you; the unclean and the clean may eat of it, of the **gazelle and the deer** alike. 16 "**Only you shall not eat the blood**; you shall pour it on the earth like water.

2. The Jews were not allowed to eat blood of any animal long before Moses was born and the ceremonial system was instituted.

Genesis 9:4 "**But you shall not eat flesh with its life**, that is, **its blood**."

3. Jews were not even allowed to have blood in their houses but had to throw it away like water.

4. Jews who ate blood of animals were cut off from the people.

Some take "cut off from his people" to mean the person was excommunicated from God's people. This is the likely meaning. Those who did wickedly were denied the blessings of the covenant. While it is possible "cut off from the people" meant execution (only context can tell), those who ate blood could make atonement for that sin. So they were not executed.

5. Was this such a big deal? Why did God warn the Jews against eating blood?

a. God did not want his people to eat blood because blood is not very healthy for human consumption even though it is eaten by most cultures of the world. Blood sausages (black pudding – invented by the Irish) are a delicacy to many. The Eskimos drink the blood of seals. But scientific studies have shown the more blood people eat, the shorter their lifespan. Yet, the fact that blood is unhealthy is not the main reason God forbade the eating of blood in the Old Testament.

b. God did not want his people to eat blood because the blood of the offerings represented the blood of the Savior who would atone for man's sins. Even the blood of the Passover sacrifice was painted on their doors and not eaten or drunk. That pointed to redemption from slavery. To eat blood the Jews would have lost that picture of salvation.

c. But what about New Testament Christians? Weren't Christians warned against eating blood?

Doesn't this mean the prohibition against blood was more than ceremonial and continues today? Let's read the passage first.

Acts 15: 28 For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: 29 **that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality.** If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.

Apostle James was making a plea to Gentiles **not to offend the Jews** who would not eat blood because of their training in the ceremonial laws. **So Apostle James was not making a prohibition. To prove this was not a law, but only a voluntary accommodation of the Jews by the Gentiles, learn from what the Apostle Paul wrote. He confirmed eating food offered to idols was fine because idols are nothing.** So we must interpret Apostle James' comment with that in mind.

1Corinthians 8:7 However, there is not **in everyone that knowledge**; for some, with **consciousness of the idol, until now eat it as a thing offered to an idol**; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. 8 But food does not commend us to God; **for neither if we eat are we the better**, nor if we do not eat are we the worse. 9 But beware lest somehow **this liberty of yours become a stumbling block** to those who are weak.

In pagan temples they worshipped idols, ate blood and strangled animals, and had ritual temple prostitution. **So when Apostle James said the Gentiles should avoid eating the blood, he wasn't saying it was evil (their gods were nothing) but he was asking for a concession to the Jews!** Also, you will notice both Apostles James and Paul were **pleading for mercy for the weak** (the Jews).

So this was not a continuation of the Old Testament prohibition against eating blood.

6. Lessons:

a. There is no little sin to God. Even the sin of eating blood brought judgment and ultimately led to excommunication from God's covenant people.

b. The blood of the cross must always be on your mind. Don't treat it lightly. That is what saved you. Remember, **being familiar with God doesn't mean you are near him.** To be near him, you have to consciously come through the blood of Jesus. This means you must constantly reflect on the work of Jesus.

c. You are not breaking this law if you enjoy a nice rare steak. Even so, what comes out of a rare steak is myoglobin, not blood. More, you may enjoy some delicious Irish black pudding sausage. I won't.

d. Be kind to others with a weak conscience. Not because you have a right to do something does it mean you should. Mask wearing? Using alcohol? Shows you might watch? Way you might dress?

Conclusion:

God forbade the use of fat to show a distinction between man and him. God forbade the use of blood so the Jews would reflect on the work of the Savior. Having died and completed the ceremonial aspects of the law, you must set aside the pictures of Jesus and focus on his accomplished work.

Brothers and sisters in the Lord:

1. Return to the Lord what belongs to him: Worship, obedience, sacrifice of praise, and tithes. Don't keep Sunday for yourselves. Don't hoard the gifts God has given you. Give the "fat" to him.

2. Remember Jesus' blood completely washed away all your sins – every single one. You don't have to give blood, but you can sing of his blood. What can wash away my sins? Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

3. Raise awareness of the blood of Jesus Christ for sinners that they may be saved and in turn they can offer him sacrifices of praise.

Finally: The blood of Jesus was shed so sinners might be saved. Are you saved? You will know if you are saved if you believe Jesus took the full punishment on the cross for sinners. If you aren't saved, ask him to save you.