

Scripture Standard

Volume 78-3 SUPPLEMENT

THE QUESTION BOX

conducted by
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A question with which I have been asked to consider is "May Christians eat Black Puddings?" and I am fairly sure that some people will find the subject almost amusing and, perhaps, hardly worthy of consideration.

That, I believe, would be a big mistake, because in the scriptures, where blood is mentioned over 300 times, it is never treated lightly or frivolously, as I think this will become evident as we look at some of passages of scripture in which blood is mentioned.

But let us first make clear what it is that we are about to consider, because whilst most of us have heard about Black Puddings, very few of us will have given them a great deal of thought, and this, I suggest, its even true among the people who eat them!

Of course, blood itself is something we all take very seriously, After all, it has been described as 'The Red River of Life', and this is certainly an apt description, because we cannot live without it.

Our lungs supply oxygen to the blood, and our heart pumps the oxygenated blood throughout our body by means of the arteries, so that among its many functions, blood supplies vital oxygen and nutrients, it keeps us either hot or cool as may be necessary, it fights infections

and it eliminates waste products.

Indeed, the importance of the role played by out blood may be judged from the number of times we are required by our doctors to undergo blood tests.

And the reason why it is so important is revealed in Leviticus 17:14 “...*for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof.*”

No! We take ‘blood’ seriously. It is the addition of the word, ‘pudding’ changes our perception and introduces a note of levity into the discussion. One can scarcely say, ‘Pudding’ without raising a smile, but in answering the question posed at the beginning of this article, I think that we shall find that this black object, created by some resourceful butcher as he sought to make use of every part of the carcass on which he had been working, and then presented as an article of food, should not be treated lightly.

Let us begin by asking:

‘Of what does Black Pudding consist?’

Well, in these days, in the different parts of our own country, and in other countries where it is produced, the manufacturers change the constituents of the ‘pudding’? in order to create their own special, or unique, recipe, but a Black Pudding originally and essentially consists of pig’s blood, which is heated and allowed to cool until it congeals, and then is stuffed into a piece of pig’s intestine.

Traditionally, it is formed into fairly round balls, but in these days it is also sold in slices, as the makers attempt to attract a modern clientele.

As to its food value, think about these facts; 3½ ounces of Black Pudding contains about 90 calories and provides;-

1 gram of carbohydrates,

1 gram of sugar,
15 grams of protein,
680 milligrams of salt,
6.4 milligrams of iron, and
35 grams of fat.

This means that 1lb. of Black Pudding contains about 220 grams of fat. This hardly qualifies to be labelled a healthy foodstuff!

But, even if Black Pudding is a perfect food, providing everything that our body needs, the question would still remain; Is it something that a Christian should eat?

What The Scriptures Reveal.

There is no obvious mention of blood in the first three chapters of Genesis, although it is apparent that, in providing a covering for Adam and Eve, the blood of animals was shed – sacrificed! - And it was God Himself who provided the sacrifice.

There is no mention of animals being slaughtered for food, because our first parents ate fruit and vegetables (Genesis 2: 29). They were not meat-eaters until after the Flood, as we shall see in our study.

The first use of the word, 'blood', a word which occurs more than 300 times in the Bible, is found in Genesis 4:10, when God said to Cain, "*The voice of your brother's blood cries to me from the ground*".

God knew when blood had been shed and the consequence of that first murder was that the ground would '*henceforth not yield unto thee her strength*'. In other words, the earth would no longer be as productive or as fruitful as before.

This is the first indication of the importance that God attached to blood.

The Covenant with Noah. (Genesis 9).

It was after the flood had subsided and Noah and his family had emerged from the Ark that God spoke about the Covenant which was to be made, not merely with Noah but with '*every living creature of all flesh*'.

Genesis 9:15.

Notice the terms that God used in speaking about the covenant, because they are both important and significant.

- a) *I establish My covenant with you and with your seed after you. v.9.*
- b) *My covenant. v.11.*
- c) *The covenantperpetual generations. v.12.*
- d) *A covenant between Me and the earth. v.13.*
- e) *I will remember My covenant. v.15.*
- f) *The everlasting covenant between God and every living creature...? v16.*
- g) *The covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that is upon the earth. v.17.*

A Covenant Invariably Consists of Conditions and Blessings

In the opening verses of this chapter, Genesis 9, we read that God blessed Noah and his sons and commissioned them to re-populate the earth. The Hebrew word used is '*MALE*' – 'to fill' or 'fill up'.

He then bestowed on Noah supremacy over every living

creature – virtually restoring to him the authority that had originally been given to Adam, Genesis 1; 28.

It was at this point that God made an addition to Man's diet. *"Every moving thing that lives shall be meat for you; just as the green herb have I given you all things."*

Genesis 9:3

Man became a 'carnivore' – a meat-eater.

But there then follows a condition - a prohibition.

V.4 *"But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, ye shall not eat".*

It is impossible not to see that this verse alone is sufficient to prohibit the eating of blood in any form whatsoever.

From the earliest of times, the Bible reveals, God has emphasized the sacredness of blood – whether animal or human, - and has hedged it around with very strict prohibitions.

(Notice, also, that embedded in this covenant is God's law relating to wilful murder.

V.6. *"Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed for in the image of God made He him.")*

Blood under the Mosaic Covenant.

The sacredness of blood was later revealed in the sacrificial system concerning which God gave instructions to Moses.

I think that we who were never under the Mosaic Law and who, consequently, were not required to implement its commands relating to animal sacrifice, are inclined to treat what we read about it in a casual sort of way.

For example; this is how we often see it:-

A Hebrew sins and brings an animal sacrifice as a sin-offering, intended to appease an aggrieved God. Having offered his sacrifice everything is put right again!

Or so we think! But it was not so simple or straightforward!

The Severity of Sacrifice Ritual

The ritual of animal sacrifice was never just a convenient and simple ceremony, because, in the first place, the animal which the sinner brought for sacrifice must be an animal which he himself had nurtured and for which he had cared.

In order to comply with the Mosaic Law, he must present the animal at the Temple, where the priest would examine it to ensure that there was no flaw or deformity in it, since anything of that nature would render it unfit for sacrifice.

However, in later times it was not uncommon for the priest to reject the animal on the pretext of having found some 'imperfection' in it, which meant that unfortunate worshipper was compelled to buy an approved animal from the priest.

There was, of course no provision made in the Mosaic Law for the purchase of animals for sacrifice. This form of 'made easy and convenient' was the invention of the priests, who, as we see when Jesus encountered them in the Temple court, had created a profitable business out of the sale of animals for sacrifice, and, for their part, the people themselves had come to accept this convenient arrangement which said, in effect, "no need to take the trouble of bringing animals for sacrifice up to the Temple. It can all be arranged at price!"

It is not surprising; therefore, that Jesus was made angry

by this commercialization of religion, and the blatant degrading of the God-given system of sacrifice.

Again; we often suppose that, on his arrival at the Temple, the worshipper simply handed over his animal to the priest, who took it away, slaughtered it, and then applied the blood 'according to the Law'.

But this also is a mistake, because, 'according to the Law' the guilty sinner must himself apply the knife to the throat of the sacrificial victim – his own lamb!– which he had brought up!– ! – reared! And which the family may even have adored as pet! (For an example; read 2nd. Samuel 12:3).

In imposing these procedures, was God being severe? Hard? Insensitive? Perhaps this is how it appears to us today, but it was in this way that God compelled the sinner to recognize the grave and painful, cost of sin!

Modern Judaism and Its Attitude to Blood.

In modern times, Judaism continues to strictly observe God's prohibition placed on the eating of any form of blood. Animals intended for food are slaughtered in a manner which allows the blood to drain away, as God commanded.

Originally, this ritual slaughter would have been supervised by the Priests, but, because the Jews have now no priesthood the function has been taken over by the Rabbi, who monitors the procedure to ensure that it is 'kosher' - a word which means, 'correct, genuine or legitimate' and, therefore, producing flesh fit for food, because it has been prepared according to the laws found in Leviticus 11, the which identify the clean and the unclean animals; that is, those fit for food and those that are unfit. Along with this chapter, we should read

Leviticus 17, and Deuteronomy 12, also passages where God specifically prohibits the use of blood as food.

Leviticus 17:10 states that God would ‘*set his Face*’ against’ anyone, either Israelite or foreigner living with the Israelites, who ate any kind of blood, and would ‘cut him off from among his people’

V.11 explains that ‘*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*’

V.12. “*No soul of you shall eat blood.....*”

V.13 declares that any hunter, who caught any animal or bird, must ‘*pour out the blood thereof and cover it with dust.*’

And v.14 reiterates what has already been stated:- “*For the life of he flesh is in the blood. Therefore.....you shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh, for the life of all flesh is in the blood thereof; whoever eats it shall be cut off*” ...

The Hebrews generally obeyed these laws, and exceptions were rare.

The prime example of a case of disobedience is found in 1st Samuel 14, where, having defeated the Philistines in battle, King Saul’s soldiers killed the animals they had captured from the enemy and, after slaughtering them, ate the flesh without allowing the blood to drain from the carcass.

When Saul heard this he told his men, “You have sinned in eating with the blood” vv. 12-14.

Blood in the New Testament. (Acts 15).

After the first Gentiles obeyed the Gospel and had been admitted to the fellowship of the Church, an important meeting was held in Jerusalem, when the apostles and Elders met together to discuss the extent to which the Gentiles might be required to comply with the Mosaic Law. The issue was raised by Jewish Christians who, still 'zealous' for the law, mistakenly believed that Gentile must first submit to the Law of Moses before they could become Christians, and the rite of circumcision was expressly mentioned.

The conclusion reached by this meeting was that the Gentiles should not be troubled by such pressure, but, out of regard for the sensitivities of their Jewish brethren, they should be advised to;-

"Abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood" Acts 15:20.

And this was the instruction which went out to all the congregations where non-Jews had fellowship.

Galatians 4:4,5 Until: "when The Fullness Of Time, Came God Sent Forth His Son ... To Redeem ..." Redemption, Forgiveness Of Sins, Was Not Possible.

The Hebrews' writer tells us this when he wrote,

"It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin"? Hebrews 10:4

In the O.T. the Hebrew word for Atonement is 'KIPPURIM' simply means "a covering up".

In other words, sins were not blotted out, cancelled, or washed away, because the blood of an animal could not suffice to deal with the sins of a Man. The lesser could not die in the place of the greater.

Even that solemn ceremony on the DAY of ATONEMENT, the most solemn and important Day in their year, did not offer the Jews forgiveness.

God accepted the sacrifice as a confession or acknowledgement of the nation's sins, and COVERED THEM for another year, always looking forward to the time when the sacrifice would be made which would effectively atone for sin.....

This is why the scriptures tell us that

“In those sacrifices there was a remembrance again made of sin every year.”

The burden of the nation's guilt was rolled forward – carried over for another year.

But think of the RIVERS of BLOOD, which flowed during O.T. times!

Sacrifices were offered every day in the Temple; morning and evening.

Personal sacrifices - National sacrifices - Sin offerings - Thank offerings.

Yet none of these provided the assurance of forgiveness.

They all pointed forward to the time when God Himself would provide the sacrifice that saves from sin.

Only in the New Testament do we read of Redemption, Remission, Forgiveness, because the shedding of the blood of Christ did something that animal sacrifices could never do.

“Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” John 1:29

“HE appeared once, at the end of the ages, to PUT AWAY sin by the sacrifice of Himself.” Hebrews 9:26

CONCLUSION

Does this prohibition on the eating of blood apply today?

‘We must recognize that some of God’s Laws were Dispensational, and therefore temporary in their application.

‘There were the Ceremonial Laws, relation to worship at specific periods in O.T. History.

The particular sacrifices about which we have spoken are examples of a ritual which belonged to the Old Mosaic Law, which Paul says; Jesus took out of the way, nailing it to His cross. That is, He treated it in the manner in which a cancelled debt was treated in ancient times. The cancelled bill was nailed to a place where all could see that the debt had been paid/

Others were Moral Laws, which are permanent and which, never change, but remain valid for all ages.

Murder, for instance, has always been condemned by God.

From the beginning, God decreed “that a man should leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife”, Jesus tells us.

His law relating the sanctity of all kinds of blood belongs to this category of Law/

A Brief Summing Up.

1. It is important to recognize that the law prohibiting the use of blood for food does not come from the Mosaic Law. It preceded the law and existed in the Patriarchal Age, as Genesis 9 clearly proves.

2. This law was not given to Hebrews, Israelites, or Jews alone, because the passage makes clear that the Covenant that God made, was made with the all mankind, as a 'perpetual covenant' the sign of which remains with us even today – the Rainbow!

3. All that we read in the scriptures relating to blood must be considered in relation to God's plan for the redemption of mankind by means of the shedding of the blood of His own Lamb.

For this reason, God declared ALL blood to be sacred!

Even animal blood must not be shed wantonly, and the wanton shedding of human blood should be dealt with severely even animal, human or divine. (We describe the blood of Christ as 'divine' because Paul urged the Elders of the Ephesian Church to:-

'Take heedto all the flock of God...?....to feed THE CHURCH OF GOD which HE PURCHASED WITH BLOOD THAT WAS HIS OWN' (Acts 20:28)

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