

119

MINISTRIES

“The following is a direct script of a teaching that is intended to be presented via video, incorporating relevant text, slides, media, and graphics to assist in illustration, thus facilitating the presentation of the material. In some places, this may cause the written material to not flow or sound rather awkward in some places. In addition, there may be grammatical errors that are often not acceptable in literary work. We encourage the viewing of the video teachings to complement the written teaching you see below.”

Fat and Blood

A lot of believers wonder about the Torah’s commandments regarding fat and blood. What do these commandments mean exactly? Most of us eat meat on a regular basis, and we often share meals together in faith-based fellowship, thus it is important for us to properly understand these commandments. To what degree are we to avoid eating fat and blood in meat?

Let’s look at a few passages regarding fat and blood:

Leviticus 3:14-17

Then he shall offer from it, as his offering for a food offering to the LORD [YHWH], the fat covering the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them at the loins and the long lobe of the liver that he shall remove with the kidneys. And the priest shall burn them on the altar as a food offering with a pleasing aroma. All fat is the LORD’s [YHWH]. It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations, in all your dwelling places, that you eat neither fat nor blood.”

Leviticus 7:22-27

The LORD [YHWH] spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to the people of Israel, saying, You shall eat no fat, of ox or sheep or goat. The fat of an animal that dies of itself and the fat of one that is torn by beasts may be put to any other use, but on no account shall you eat it. For every person who eats of the fat of an animal of which a food offering may be made to the LORD [YHWH] shall be cut off from his people. Moreover, you shall eat no blood whatever, whether of fowl or of animal, in any of your dwelling places. Whoever eats any blood, that person shall be cut off from his people.”

Let’s start with the topic of fat.

Leviticus 3:14-17 is concerning the offering of entrails to YHWH. There is a particular type of hard fatty tissue surrounding the kidneys and liver. In a cow, this would be called suet. This fat is forbidden for us to eat regardless of where we live, in the context of temple offerings.

Leviticus 7:22-23 appears to directly state that we should eat no fat all together. This would include all fat, not just the hard fatty tissue surrounding the liver and kidneys, and this is also in the context of temple offerings.

In verses 24, the directive to not eat fat is specific to an ox, sheep, or goat. But more specifically, the context is referring to the ox, sheep, or goat that is being offered up to YHWH.

Leviticus 7:25

For every person who eats of the fat of an animal of which a food offering may be made to the LORD [YHWH] shall be cut off from his people.

We must keep the commandment in context.

The fat not covering the organs is a desirable and nutritional part of animal meat and it would be tempting to keep the fat for oneself in an offering to YHWH, which is the focus of Leviticus 3.

The fat of an animal being offered up to YHWH is not to be stolen from YHWH. It is to be offered up to YHWH along with the rest of the animal.

Again, we must keep the commandment in context.

Verse 24 makes specific mention of a different situation. We are not to also not eat fat from an animal that has died of itself or has been torn by beasts.”

Leviticus 7:24

The fat of an animal that dies of itself and the fat of one that is torn by beasts may be put to any other use, but on no account shall you eat it.

This makes sense because, according to the Torah, any animals met with such criteria we are already forbidden to eat:

Leviticus 22:8

He shall not eat what dies of itself or is torn by beasts, and so make himself unclean by it: I am the LORD.’ [YHWH].

So why is this mentioned in the context of fat in Leviticus 7:24?

We cannot eat such fat or offer it up to YHWH, however, YHWH says we can put such fat to other good use. For example, fat can be used to make soap. In such instances, fat from animals that died by such means cannot be eaten, but used for other useful purposes.

Some people, in misunderstanding this commandment, set out to salt and dry all of their meat to remove all fat.

Think about that for a moment.

When the Passover lamb was slain on the 14th day of the first month, do you think they had time to salt and dry all of the Passover meat to remove all of the fat?

Of course not. The Passover was eaten within hours of it being slain.

It would have been impossible to remove all of the fat from that Passover lamb that was eaten, nor was it necessary, as that is not the context of the commandment found in Leviticus 7.

There will always be some degree of fat in all meat, even in the Passover meal.

A fatty animal, in the Scriptures, is considered to be desirable:

Luke 15:22-23 (NKJV)

"But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. 'And bring the **fatted calf** here and kill it, **and let us eat and be merry; 'for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.'** And they began to be merry.

A calf that has been well fed will consequently have more fat. So fat in meat is ok, and it is to be expected. It does not contradict Leviticus 3 or 7, as Leviticus 3 is focused on the hard fatty tissue that surrounds the kidneys and liver, and only in the context of the temple offerings. Leviticus 7 is also in the context of not eating the fat that is to be offered up to YHWH.

Of course, we are not to eat the fat of an animal that dies naturally or is torn by beasts. In fact, we are not to eat anything from animals that have died in such ways.

So what about the blood?

The blood found in the muscle is different than the blood found in veins (hemoglobin vs. myoglobin).

It is literally impossible to remove all of the myoglobin from meat. Most meat will not contain much, if any, hemoglobin.

By contrast to hemoglobin, which is found in circulating red blood cells or erythrocytes, myoglobin is found intracellularly in body tissues.

Both hemoglobin and myoglobin are red in color.

We are not to eat any blood (hemoglobin) in any of our meat, regardless of where we live:

Leviticus 7:26-27

Moreover, you shall eat no blood whatever, whether of fowl or of animal, in any of your dwelling places. Whoever eats any blood, that person shall be cut off from his people."

This passage specifically mentions in our dwelling places, so we know that these instructions apply in any situation, not just when someone is offering an animal to YHWH in the tabernacle or temple.

The blood that flows through our veins (hemoglobin) should be allowed to drain from the animal prior to eating. This is already standard practice today.

Often, the red liquid you might see surrounding meat you might buy in the United States is artificial. Often a red dye and water is added to make the meat appear more fresh (less grey).

Myoglobin is naturally found in the muscle tissue and there is nothing that one can do to remove all of it (as opposed to hemoglobin). The Passover meal would have not only contained fat, it would have also contained myoglobin.

In the Ancient Near East (ANE), pagan nations would ceremonially drink blood of strangled animals and be involved with temple prostitution in the worship of idols. However, YHWH does not want to be worshipped like false gods were worshipped (Deuteronomy 12:31). This is why in Acts 15 James states that new Gentile believers should first focus on immediately ceasing all idol worship and related activity, and then, learn the Torah every Shabbat.

Acts 15:19-21

Therefore my judgment is that we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God, but should write to them to abstain from the things polluted by idols, and from sexual immorality, and from what has been strangled, and from blood. For from ancient generations Moses has had in every city those who proclaim him, for he is read every Sabbath in the synagogues.”

In summary, animal fat can be eaten as long as it is not fat from an animal that died in of itself, or is the hard fatty tissue surrounding the animal’s internal organs if that animal is being offered up to YHWH. Fat from an animal that died in of itself can be used for purposes that do not involve human consumption, such as for soap, candles, or other purposes.

Regarding blood, it is standard practice for most butchers to drain blood or hemoglobin. However, it should be recognized that removing 100% of all hemoglobin is impossible regardless of methods used. More importantly, the red liquid that we find in muscle tissue is actually myoglobin and not hemoglobin. Hemoglobin takes oxygen from lungs and transports to the rest of the body and is what we would normally consider to be blood. While myoglobin is a protein structure that stores oxygen in muscle tissue.

We hope that this teaching has blessed you, and remember, continue to test everything.

Shalom

For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at www.testeverything.net

Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.

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