

119

MINISTRIES

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Answering Your Questions (Niddah, Hanukkah Blessing, Matthew 2:23, etc.)

119 Ministries receives thousands of emails a year. And as you would expect, many of those emails contain questions. Quite often, we repeatedly receive various forms of the same questions. Ideally, we would like to have a teaching available for every question we receive, however, some questions can be answered rather briefly, and do not require a regular length teaching to serve as a response. That is the purpose of this teaching series, to offer an easily available vehicle to answer your common questions.

In this teaching series, we will read a collection of hand-picked questions that we have received via email. Then, for whatever it is worth, we will offer a brief response, hopefully leading those interested in the right direction to find the answers that they are seeking.

So, let's get started. First question:

Shalom! Just wanted to ask you something. I thought about the prohibition of eating meat of animals who died naturally, and I thought about eggs. If someone takes an "alive" egg from a hen and then eats it, I think it is lawful, but if we are using eggs from a fridge in a supermarket, when a bird usually cannot hatch from it, is it considered "dead" egg and is it unlawful to eat it? I would like it if you would answer in your "Answering Your Questions" series with your thoughts about it. Thank you, Shalom

As you can imagine, we are quite accustomed to receiving similar questions over and over throughout the years. However, occasionally we receive a question that causes us to admire the creativity or insight embedded in a particular question. This question would serve as one of those examples. We have never been asked this question before and hopefully we can answer it to the satisfaction of most while also being Biblically accurate.

The question is basically this. Since we cannot eat animals that died naturally according to the Torah, can we eat an egg in which the contents of the egg have died? This is an interesting question. Let's see if

we can reason through this and generate a sound conclusion. First, it is always best practice to consider the verse or verses in question. In this case it is Leviticus 22:8.

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].

The first thing we should notice about this commandment is that the restriction is not whether we can or cannot eat something that has died, but the restriction is related to something that has died naturally (dies of itself) or dies as the result of being attacked by another animal. A natural death could include old age, sickness, an accident, or any other similar event that led to a natural death.

In comparing Leviticus 22:8 to the circumstances surrounding an egg in a typical grocery store it would be difficult to conclude that eating such an egg would be restricted by the Torah. The egg was certainly not torn apart by beast, nor did the egg die of itself. Those are the two clear qualifiers for the restriction mentioned in Leviticus 22:8.

The contents of the egg died not in of itself. Instead, the egg died because man intentionally exposed it to conditions that led to its death. Because man contributed to the death of the egg through intentional means, it could not be argued that the egg died in of itself or was torn by beasts.

We suspect that the spirit of the commandment here in Leviticus 22:8 is that eating an animal that died in of itself or being torn by beasts could expose a person to a greater chance of bacteria, parasites, or other types of pathogens. Obviously, this would not be a good thing. Anyone doing this would be unclean for a period of time and not be permitted to enter the Temple. Not only does a grocery store egg not violate Leviticus 22:8, it does not even violate the likely spirit behind the commandment as steps are taken to ensure grocery store eggs are as sanitary as possible.

This commandment often gives rise to the topic of roadkill. What if we hit a deer with a car, for example, can we eat the deer?

The spirit of Leviticus 22:8 seems to restrict the eating of an animal in which we do not know exactly how or when it died. If a deer is hit by a car by an unknown person at an unknown time, we suspect that eating such meat would not be compatible with the spirit of Leviticus 22:8. But, perhaps if you were the one to hit the deer, it would be compatible with Leviticus 22:8.

Thus, from a Torah perspective, roadkill may possibly be eaten, however, there are still risks involved that go beyond what the Torah instructs for us. For example, being hit by a car could cause the internal organs to rupture, immediately tainting the meat. Thus, common sense and related best practices of should be exercised in such circumstances when harvesting and butchering such meat.

Let's move on to the next question.

I have a personal question to ask. Can you tell me if a woman having her monthly must leave her marriage bed during her time as in the Biblical days and sit in certain chairs and not be touched?

This question is related to what is often referred to as the Laws of Niddah. These can be found in Leviticus 15:19-30.

Leviticus 15:19-30

“When a woman has a discharge, and the discharge in her body is blood, she shall be in her menstrual impurity for seven days, and whoever touches her shall be unclean until the evening. And everything on which she lies during her menstrual impurity shall be unclean. Everything also on which she sits shall be unclean. And whoever touches her bed shall wash his clothes and bathe himself in water and be unclean until the evening. And whoever touches anything on which she sits shall wash his clothes and bathe himself in water and be unclean until the evening. Whether it is the bed or anything on which she sits, when he touches it he shall be unclean until the evening. And if any man lies with her and her menstrual impurity comes upon him, he shall be unclean seven days, and every bed on which he lies shall be unclean.

“If a woman has a discharge of blood for many days, not at the time of her menstrual impurity, or if she has a discharge beyond the time of her impurity, all the days of the discharge she shall continue in uncleanness. As in the days of her impurity, she shall be unclean. Every bed on which she lies, all the days of her discharge, shall be to her as the bed of her impurity. And everything on which she sits shall be unclean, as in the uncleanness of her menstrual impurity. And whoever touches these things shall be unclean, and shall wash his clothes and bathe himself in water and be unclean until the evening. But if she is cleansed of her discharge, she shall count for herself seven days, and after that she shall be clean. And on the eighth day she shall take two turtledoves or two pigeons and bring them to the priest, to the entrance of the tent of meeting. And the priest shall use one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering. And the priest shall make atonement for her before the LORD for her unclean discharge.

As we can see, a woman who is in the time of her menstruation is unclean during that time. In addition, objects that she lays on or sits on can also become unclean, presumably because of the possibility of exposure to blood, and thus cause anyone else laying or sitting on the same objects to also become unclean.

The first thing we should note is that a person being unclean is not a sin, but simply a status. An unclean status means a person cannot enter the temple until they are no longer unclean. When the temple existed and temple activity was expected, it was common practice to avoid becoming unclean. Thus, not sleeping in the same bed for a time or sitting in the same chairs as a menstruating wife in an effort to avoid becoming unclean, was perhaps likely. In some Jewish doctrines, this practice exists to this day.

Today, in the absence of a temple, there is little consequence to becoming unclean. Bathing and the washing of clothes is also something we do regularly, which is part of the process of restoring a Biblically clean status. Because of this, most do not entertain such measures of separate beds and chairs during this time, although there is nothing wrong with that should such steps be taken.

But what about “touching” a menstruating woman? Does that make a person unclean? What does touching even mean?

Leviticus 15:19b

...and whoever touches her shall be unclean until the evening.

In this verse we are not told exactly what “touching” means exactly. The word touching could range from taking your finger and poking her on the shoulder all the way to the more likely intended meaning, which is a form of intimate touching that would expose a person to blood, such as, but not limited to, sexual intercourse. This interpretation appears most likely because a bed and a chair likely only causes

uncleanness because of the possibility of being exposed to menstruation blood. Thus the same should be true in our interpretation of what constitutes as touching.

In addition to such touching causing uncleanness, we also know that sexual intercourse during this time is expressly forbidden.

Leviticus 18:19

“You shall not approach a woman to uncover her nakedness while she is in her menstrual uncleanness.

Leviticus 20:18

If a man lies with a woman during her menstrual period and uncovers her nakedness, he has made naked her fountain, and she has uncovered the fountain of her blood. Both of them shall be cut off from among their people.

In summary, to answer the question, no, it is not necessary today to avoid sitting in the same chairs or sleeping in the same bed. In such cases we simply become unclean, just as Yeshua did in the touching of a dead body. It is not exactly clear what constitutes as touching, but exposure to blood is likely the intended meaning. If one is exposed to blood, then this would also result in a similar unclean status. In the absence of a temple, being unclean is of no practical effect. In addition, bathing and washing clothes is all that is required to become clean again in the evening. A specific form of touching that is forbidden during the menstruation period is sexual intercourse.

The next question requires some context as it is referring to a particular teaching of 119 Ministries.

In our teaching on Hanukkah in our Mo’edim Series, we mention that there are traditional blessings that are often said in celebration of this Jewish holiday. There is nothing wrong with faith-based tradition in and of itself. We want to make that clear. However, if a tradition violates the Torah, then we believe that to be a problem. We expect that to be understandable. A traditional blessing over the candles during Hannukah declares the lighting of the Hanukkiah as a commandment from YHWH. Here is the blessing:

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of all, who hallows us with mitzvot, commanding us to kindle the Hanukkah lights.

However, YHWH never commanded us to light the Hanukkah lights. Thus, this blessing says something that is not true and is in violation of Deuteronomy 4:2 which instructs us to not add to the Torah.

Deuteronomy 4:2

You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD [YHWH] your God that I command you.

That is our position. A question was submitted to us that relies on Deuteronomy 17 to suggest that the blessing related to the Hannukah candles does not contradict the Torah.

Here is what was asked:

As far as saying the blessing over the candles is a violation of Torah is not correct. In Judaism we know and acknowledge it is not a written commandment however it is said in honor of the written commandment Deuteronomy 17. Maimonides discusses this in his code of

Jewish law and explains that G-d commands us in the Torah to obey the instructions of the sages of future generations. "You shall not divert from that which they teach you," says the verse. This means that when we obey the sages, we are doing G-d's will. Hence, it is G-d who sanctified us and commanded to obey the sages who instituted the lighting of the Chanukah candles. How would you respond to this?

The argument here is that YHWH commanded us to obey the Jewish sages. So when the sages declare that we are to recite that blessing, then we should obey what the sages tell us to do, and thus we are obeying YHWH and the blessing does not violate the Torah. (Deuteronomy 4:2).

This declaration that we should obey the sages is referring to Deuteronomy 17:11. Maimonides is wrong about what Deuteronomy 17:11 says. Deuteronomy 17:11 says we should obey the outcome or decision of civil court cases of the Levitical priests and judges. A blessing is not the result of a civil court case decision. To say that Deuteronomy 17:11 should include obeying anything a sage instructs, including blessings, is a perversion of the Biblical text.

Deuteronomy 17:8-13

“If any case arises requiring decision between one kind of homicide and another, one kind of legal right and another, or one kind of assault and another, any case within your towns that is too difficult for you, then you shall arise and go up to the place that the LORD [YHWH] your God will choose. And you shall come to the Levitical priests and to the judge who is in office in those days, and you shall consult them, and they shall declare to you the decision. Then you shall do according to what they declare to you from that place that the LORD [YHWH] will choose. And you shall be careful to do according to all that they direct you. According to the instructions that they give you, and according to the decision which they pronounce to you, you shall do. You shall not turn aside from the verdict that they declare to you, either to the right hand or to the left. The man who acts presumptuously by not obeying the priest who stands to minister there before the LORD [YHWH] your God, or the judge, that man shall die. So you shall purge the evil from Israel. And all the people shall hear and fear and not act presumptuously again.

The unfortunate reality is that, in some circles, Deuteronomy 17 becomes a license to violate Deuteronomy 4:2. We believe that Deuteronomy 17 should be kept in its intended context. A Jewish sage or anyone else is not granted the right to add to the Torah. Again, this is not to say that faith-based tradition is wrong, only tradition that violates the Torah is wrong. Elevating tradition to the authority of God's commandments is “adding” to the Torah. Declaring that God “commanded” us to light candles is literally doing just that. He did not command us to light candles for Hanukkah. It can be a meaningful tradition when applied with the right mindset; but it is not a commandment.

Let's proceed to the next question.

Hi, I was wondering if y'all think is ok for an engaged Christian couple to kiss mouth to mouth before marriage...There are two important passages that will give us a biblical principle about kissing before marriage. The first passage is 2 Timothy 2:22. Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart...Matthew 5:27-28 warns us to not indulge in thinking about having sex with another person who is not our husband or wife. This means that it is a sin for an unmarried man or woman to do anything that will cause himself or herself to be intentionally, sexually stimulated. It is also a sin to

cause another person to be sexually stimulated unless we are married to that person. When we cause someone to whom we are not married to be sexually stimulated, we can cause them to stumble. Matthew 18:7 warns us to not cause another person to stumble.

While we understand what was said and why it was said, we find nothing in the Torah that forbids the lips of a man and woman to touch prior to marriage. While we should certainly flee from sexual sin, and it is wise to avoid putting oneself into potentially tempting situations, we would have to stop short of saying it is a sin to kiss someone of the opposite sex that is not your spouse. In fact, teaching that it is wrong to kiss prior to marriage could actually be what is sin, as it may be adding to the Torah and thus violating Deuteronomy 4:2.

It's true that a kiss may incite passions within some people and can lead to sexual immorality, but a kiss in and of itself, is not sin. The same would be true of hugging or holding hands.

2 Timothy 2:22 does talk about fleeing from desiring things forbidden that youthful people often do desire. Obviously, that can cover a great many things. It may be wise to do our best to avoid the temptation, but it is not a sin to be tempted. Paul also talked about how it's best to remain unmarried, but if you are overtaken by passions, then one should get married. This was Paul giving wisdom, not stating if something is or is not sin.

One doesn't have to touch the opposite sex to desire them. If it is wrong to kiss because it could incite a lustful passion, then it would also be a sin to hug someone of the opposite sex, or even to look at them at all. You can see where this is going. This approach would be going down the road of the Pharisees, which included all sorts of instructions beyond the Torah. They created a fence around the Torah, and in doing so, they violated the Torah. Our suggestion is to not make the same mistake.

Lusts are often a heart issue, which leads to the mention of in Matthew 5:27-28. The Messiah talks about looking at a "married" woman as committing adultery. The sin here is a matter of the heart, not physical action. In this case the heart is lusting after sin, as adultery is sin.

We cannot say that "*it is a sin for an unmarried man or woman to do anything that will cause himself or herself to be intentionally, sexually stimulated.*" What was the sin here? Was it simply sexual desire? No. Sexual desire in of itself is not a sin.

Yeshua declared it wrong to lust after a married woman. Why? Because adultery is wrong. That lust cannot lead to anything good.

However, this is different between unmarried persons. Lustful passions between two unmarried persons prior to marriage is what is expected. A couple considering marriage or engaged to be married likely have sexual attraction toward each other, and that is a good thing! There is nothing wrong with that. That attraction is a part of leading to marriage, and even children, which is good. The difference in this case, versus lusting after adultery, is that while sexual attraction or lustful passions of the unmarried couple does not necessarily violate the Torah, they cannot act on the sexual attraction in such a way that leads to sexual immorality.

Again, Matthew 5:27-28 reveals a problem with a heart issue, not an issue regarding physical sexual stimulation. Simply looking at a woman may stimulate a man, so should men avoid looking at all women? Of course not. In Matthew 5:27-28 Yeshua was addressing a heart issue that is revealing a lusting after something that is sin. Lusting after someone who is unmarried that you want to marry, or

are committed to marrying, is not a sin.

What this means in relation to the original question is that not all kissing is related to lusting after sin. It's one thing to give a kiss goodnight, it's another to have a degree of kissing that leads down the road to a sexual encounter. One of the fruits of the Spirit is self-control; we should be exercising that as well. Just like we should also take every thought captive; we need to control our minds. Again, self-control is key. Kissing can indeed lead to sin, and a couple may understandably decide to avoid kissing prior to marriage for that reason; but since not all kissing leads to sin it would be adding to the Torah to forbid it.

For more on this topic, we would recommend our series titled "[One Flesh](#)" by 119 Ministries.

That being said, let's move on to the next question.

What prophecy is Matthew 2:23 referring to regarding Jesus being a Nazarene? Some use this to claim error in the New Testament and why we cannot follow it. Thoughts?

Matthew cited the Old Testament for messianic prophecy more frequently than any other New Testament author. Usually, when Matthew is citing Old Testament messianic prophecy, he is citing a particular prophet or prophecy, and says "*to fulfill what was said,*" unless he is referring to several events (Matthew 1:22; 2:15; 2:17; 4:14; 8:17; 12:17; 13:35; 21:4; 27:9).

When Matthew refers to several prophecies or prophets he says "*that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled*" (Matthew 26:56; Luke 24:44) Or "*the scriptures being fulfilled*" (Matthew 26:54). Note that the words "writings," "prophets," and "scriptures" are all plural. That is important.

It is also important to recognize that every time Matthew makes mention of a specific prophetic utterance, he follows it with the word "saying," indicating a singular direct quote from the Old Testament.

So knowing this, how does Matthew 2:23 read?

Matthew 2:23

And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, so that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, that he would be called a Nazarene.

Notice that the word "prophets" is plural. Also, Matthew did not use the word "saying," so this was not a direct quote from any prophet, despite the usage of quotes in some English translations. Given Matthew's historical pattern of citing fulfilled messianic prophecy, it is most likely that Matthew was not looking at one particular prophecy, but was instead referencing a prophetic theme or common thread that Matthew found in the messianic prophecies.

If that is the nature of Matthew's prophetic citation, then what scriptures did Matthew likely have in mind exactly?

Do we see a play on words that caught Matthew's eye? A play on words is not uncommon in Jewish Biblical interpretation. Is there a Messianic theme?

The answer? Yes for both.

In Matthew 1:23, reference is made to Isaiah 7:14, while in Matthew 4:12–16, reference is made to Isaiah 9:1–2. And these chapters are part of an important Messianic section in Isaiah (chapters 7–11), culminating with the major Messianic prophecy in Isaiah 11 which begins with these words: “**There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.**” (Isaiah 11:1). And what is the Hebrew word used here for “Branch”? It is *netser*, a form closely related to the Hebrew word for Nazareth (Natzeret).

This is important for several reasons.

First, it shows us that Matthew had the entire Messianic section of Isaiah 7–11 in mind when he quoted prophecies regarding Yeshua’s birth (Isaiah 7:14) and early life (Isaiah 9:1–2; 11:1).

Second, it gives us a clear link to the word Nazareth.

Third, it ties in with the well-known concept of the Messiah being called “the Branch” (elsewhere with the Hebrew word *tsemach*) (Jeremiah 23:5; 33:15; Zechariah. 3:8; 6:12; Isaiah 4:2).

In Rabbinic literature, as well as in the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Messiah was sometimes referred to as *netser*. There is also a Talmudic story speaking disparagingly of Yeshua, in which one of his disciples is called *netser*.

Fourth, both in the context of Isaiah 11:1 and in the lowly reputation of Nazareth, it connects with the humble origins of the Messiah (Isaiah 53:1–3) the lowly reputation of Nazareth is reflected in Nathanael’s words in John 1:46a upon hearing the claim that the Messiah was a man from Nazareth. Thus, in reality, Matthew was quite insightful in regard to his understanding of Messianic prophecy.

Finally, as noted by other scholars, Ezra 9:10–12 could be approached in the same way as Matthew 2:23.

Ezra 9:10-12

“And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? For we have forsaken your commandments, which you commanded by your servants the prophets, saying, ‘The land that you are entering, to take possession of it, is a land impure with the impurity of the peoples of the lands, with their abominations that have filled it from end to end with their uncleanness. Therefore do not give your daughters to their sons, neither take their daughters for your sons, and never seek their peace or prosperity, that you may be strong and eat the good of the land and leave it for an inheritance to your children forever.’”

Note that there is a similar problem with these words of Ezra. These exact words are not found anywhere in the prophets. So what is Ezra quoting? Was Ezra just inventing these words?

No, of course not! Just like Matthew, Ezra refers to the prophets, as in multiple prophets. Ezra was simply summarizing and paraphrasing the repeating message of YHWH’s prophets throughout time. Just like Matthew’s insight appears to be a direct quote, so does Ezra’s. If we have a problem with Matthew’s methods of Biblical interpretation and citation, then we must have a problem with Ezra’s as well.

Of course, someone could argue that Ezra was quoting from some lost prophetic books, but then we could just as well argue that Matthew was doing the same! To do so in either case is completely unnecessary. Ezra was just simply restating the consistent message of the prophets in his own words;

Matthew was simply making reference to a common Messianic theme, one which caught his attention through an interesting play on words as he was going through Isaiah 7-11.

That's all of the questions that we have for this part of the series. If this series and presentation format interested you, there are many more questions we will be covering in the subsequent parts of this teaching series. As always, if you have questions for 119 Ministries, please use the Contact Us page offered on our website, <http://119ministries.com/contact-us>. And if you do contact us, thank you for your patience as our team works to respond.

We pray you have been blessed by this teaching.

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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