



April 5, 2009

Universal Laws: Eating Blood

Last week we discussed the law that God issued prohibiting the taking of human life. Paired with that command are statements that speak of the sanctity of blood. These statements reveal a pattern and usage of blood that will continue throughout the scriptures. As Noah and his family emerged from the ark into a new world, many things were different. Peter refers to this difference in his letter referring to *“the world that then was”* (2 Pet 3.6). This world perished in the flood and as the family set out to reestablish life, God incorporates a number of changes. One of those was the change of man’s diet by adding living things. *“Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.”* (Gen 9.3). God also states a limitation to this in the next verse stating, *“But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat.”* (Gen 9.4). The reason for this is that the blood represented life and is identified as the agent that sustains existence. Like marriage and the prohibition against murder, this is a universal command that was put in place for the family of mankind. In the New Testament, as Gentiles are converted to Christianity, there were questions that arose concerning what these converts relationship to the Law of Moses should be. As the apostles and others met to discuss this, and determine what the will of God was, we find a restating of this universal prohibition against eating blood. James states, *“Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood.”* (Acts 15.19-20). The prohibition against eating blood, issued by God, was still in effect. We must note that this prohibition, while also stated in the Law of Moses, was commanded by God long before the Law was put in place. The universal laws that were given: marriage, abstaining from fornication and murder, were also parts of the Law and this establishes the fact that certain conditions for life on Earth were imposed on all humans, not just those who serve God. Throughout history there has been a recognition

that blood was essential for life. A term used for murder is bloodshed and denotes violence and conflict. Blood was sanctified by God as representing not only the state of living, but also salvation. Blood was the agent by which the Hebrews were spared the death of the firstborn in Egypt and detailed instructions for the Passover were specific in this respect (**Exodus 12.1-28**). Another element is introduced in the keeping of the Passover and that was the offering of the lamb whose blood it was that would provide the coverage and protection against the plague. The implication here is not mystical. There was no innate property of blood that could bring this preservation about. God's command, and the mind of God, would protect those from death covered by the blood of the lamb representing the power of God to save. In this respect the blood represented the adherence of the Hebrews to God's command and rendered blood, as prescribed by Him, the agent of salvation. Blood representing life and death as well as salvation are sacred things in the sight of the Lord. Pagan rituals and occult practices, both in the ancient and modern worlds, incorporate the ingestion of blood as part of certain ritualistic practices. Certain cultures in the world practice blood drinking either as a cultural tradition, or, with the mystical purpose of being endowed with certain characteristics of the animals, or humans, from which the blood has been acquired. In religious circles that claim themselves to be Christians, the communion is sometimes thought to be a process by which the fruit of the vine and bread are transformed into the essence of the body and blood of Christ. This is a failure to understand the figurative nature of the juice (fruit of the vine) and the bread (unleavened) to represent the body and blood of the Lord. Over the past twenty years or so vampirism and Goth culture have received media attention as some circles have adopted the drinking of blood as a means of gaining strength and other attributes from the source. All of these practices are neither commanded by God, nor are they acceptable to him. Those who seek to be pleasing to God will respect this command as it applies to all of humanity.