
JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

Medical Care and Blood Files

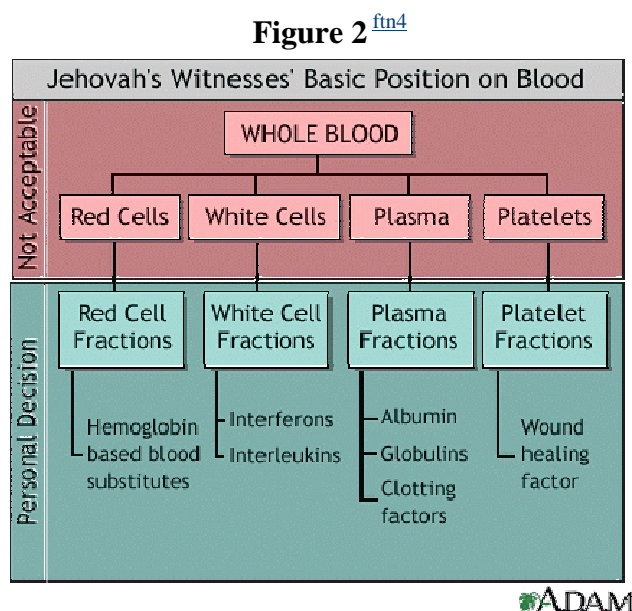
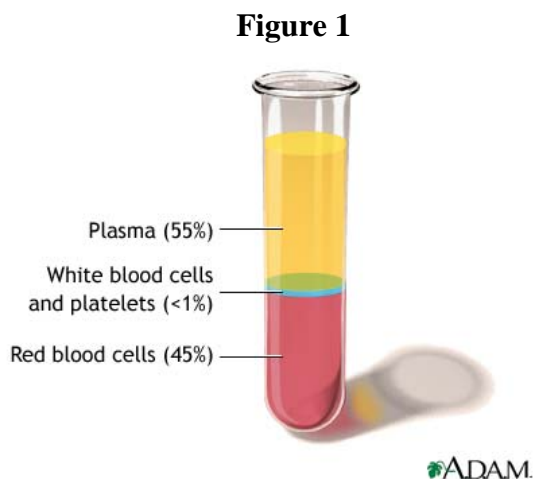
God's View on the Proper Use of Blood.

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What is the basis for refusing blood transfusions but accepting fractions?

Jehovah's Witnesses are known for their refusal to accept blood transfusions—as “Christians are commanded to ‘abstain from...blood.’” At the same time, “Jehovah's Witnesses *accept reliable nonblood medical alternatives*, which are increasingly recognized in the medical field.—Acts 15:19, 20, 28, 29; compare Genesis 9:3, 4; Leviticus 17:10-14.”^{fn1} “Jehovah's Witnesses *request nonblood alternatives*, which are widely used and accepted by the medical community. They do this because of the Bible's command to ‘keep abstaining from...blood.’ (Acts 15:29; see also Genesis 9:3, 4; Leviticus 7:26, 27; 17:1, 2, 10-12; Deuteronomy 12:23-25.)”^{fn2} It is also known that we accept fractions of the four components of blood, namely plasma, thrombocytes (platelets), leukocytes (white blood cells), and erythrocytes (red blood cells). Fractions of those four are acceptable according to the individual's conscience—as is “the immediate reinfusion of a patient's own blood during surgery, a medical process known as blood salvaging.”^{fn3}

(Refer to Figure 1 for the percentage of the four main components defining blood and to Figure 2 for the basic position on blood held by Jehovah's Witnesses.)



That being the case, how can Jehovah's Witnesses harmonize their view of blood and what is *or is not* allowed by means of conscience *with what the Bible has to say on the subject*? Is it a rational view, or is it irrational? The following will be different yet related lines of thought that come together to mold the religious decisions that we have formed on blood.

First, one must appreciate that our view is one that is left up to the individual's conscience as to what they will partake of and what they will not *and yet hold intact the command to abstain from blood*. Is it possible to take blood, fractionate it to a certain level, and use it for human need without violating the scriptural command to abstain from blood? This is an important question that will be addressed in the following articles. Surely this will not cover every aspect of the subject, but it endeavors to address the aspects mentioned above as to whether a rational view can be presented to defend the belief that we have established toward **accepting blood fractions below the cellular and whole plasma level and yet not be in technical or scriptural violation of abstaining from blood.**

“[In-Depth](#)” presents articles that explore the history of abstaining from blood from Genesis to Acts, and how this has a direct bearing on Christianity. Appendix articles have also been prepared: the first focuses on the choice of consuming blood-products or not in a life-threatening situation—in the setting of what actually occurred in a Nazi concentration camp; the second considers the controversial issue of organ transplants in light of its historical and medical context, and the last one similarly addresses the related vaccination situation. Finally, please consider what Jehovah's Witnesses have officially published in response to various inquiries on this complex topic in “[Additional Reading](#).”

If you truly believe that the Bible is the unerring, inspired Word of God, and you are sincerely interested in knowing the truth of this matter from God's perspective, then please carefully consider the following detailed presentations with questions and answers.

In-Depth

1. [Law, Mercy, and the Question of Property](#) –Page 3
2. [Pre-Law Society and the Apostolic Decree](#) –Page 18
3. [“Abstain from Blood” – A Command or a Concession for Jewish Sensitivities?](#) –Page 34
4. [“Abstain from Blood” – Noachian? Jewish? Christian? Or all of the above? The Underlying Principle](#) – Page 39
5. [Blood: Point/Counterpoint](#) –Page 41
6. [Abstaining from Blood](#) by *Al Kidd* –Page 42

Appendix

- I. [Ravensbrück and blutwurst](#) –Page 56
- II. [The Position on Organ Transplants](#) –Page 57
- III. [Were vaccinations ever prohibited?](#) –Page 62

Additional Reading

- A. [How should a Christian view using blood as fertilizer, as animal food or in some other way that does not involve his eating it?](#) (*The Watchtower*, October 15, 1981, pp. 30-1) –Page 66
- B. [Does Deuteronomy 14:21 contradict Leviticus 11:40?](#) (*The Watchtower*, July 1, 2005, p. 27) –Page 67
- C. [Might the Bible's prohibition about blood apply only to blood from a victim killed by man, not to unbled meat of an animal that died of itself or blood from a live animal or human?](#) (*The Watchtower*, May 15, 1983, pp. 30-1) –Page 68
- D. [How can we harmonize 1 Corinthians 10:25 with advice in *The Watchtower*?](#) (*The Watchtower*, November 1, 1961, pp. 669-70) –Page 70

E. [Do Jehovah's Witnesses oppose the people's use of transfusions? \(plus other questions\)](#) (*The Watchtower*, July 1, 1951, p. 416) –Page 71

Footnotes

1. "Blood Transfusion." [Beliefs—Medical Treatment](http://jw-media.org/beliefs/medical.htm). <<http://jw-media.org/beliefs/medical.htm>> (italics added) You are cordially invited to visit that webpage for further information.
2. "Medical alternatives to blood transfusions can save lives." [Jehovah's Witnesses and Medical Care](http://jw-media.org/medical/medical_care.htm). <http://jw-media.org/medical/medical_care.htm> (italics added) You are cordially invited to visit that webpage for further information.
3. "Blood Transfusion." *supra* note 1. For further information on blood and minor blood fractions, see [Blood: Why So Valuable?](http://www.watchtower.org/e/200608/article_01.htm) <http://www.watchtower.org/e/200608/article_01.htm>, which appeared in the August 2006 *Awake!* cover series, and "Questions From Readers" in the June 1, 1990 and June 15, 2004 issues of *The Watchtower*.
4. A similar diagram entitled "Basic Stand on Blood" has been published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

1) Law, Mercy, and the Question of Property

Jehovah is undoubtedly the Supreme Owner of all things. As Owner he has placed certain things within man's prerogative, sometimes under certain conditions, such as withholding something for Himself. (Genesis 1:29; 2:16, 17; Psalm 115:16) Scriptures consistently teach that blood is a sacred substance, and one that he has withheld for Himself. (Genesis 9:3-6; Leviticus 17:11, 14; Acts 15:19, 20; cf. Ezekiel 18:4) For further information concerning the sacred nature of blood, please see the next article entitled "[Pre-Law Society and the Apostolic Decree](#)."

It therefore becomes clear that as the Owner of blood, Jehovah God is the authority to whom we look toward for setting the conditions in which blood may be used by humans. One thing that is helpful is examining how Jehovah delineates the use of things that are owned by his faithful servants, and are ultimately owned by Him. This is helpful because it may establish a precedent in viewing things that are owned and withheld by Jehovah, if it becomes clear that he has set a condition of usability for the thing owned.

What do the scriptures reveal God's thinking to be in relation to his property and even the property of others? A lesson of mercy can be learned by observing how God commanded the property of others (ultimately His property) to be handled.

Deuteronomy 23 tells us:

24 "In case you go into the vineyard of your fellowman, you must eat only enough grapes for you to satisfy your soul, but you must not put any into a receptacle of yours.

25 "In case you go into the standing grain of your fellowman, you must pluck off only the ripe ears with your hand, but the sickle you must not swing to and fro upon the standing grain of your fellowman.

This was a "general" legal provision that did not involve a specific day or time period as to its application. Why though, was this provision made? It was out of mercy for those who might find themselves in need of food such as the widow or the poor one in their midst or simply the one who found himself hungry while passing through his neighbor's field.

What does this teach us about God and his view of property under certain circumstances, His or otherwise in connection with human need? It clearly shows that in a time of need, a person could be shown mercy by a sharing of what we have that is rightfully ours with them for their benefit. How far though would this provision

of generosity and mercy go? Would it be extended to the point that our own crop would be significantly depleted? No, such an abuse was not what God wanted out of that provision, either at the hand of one individual or at the hand of many individuals partaking of the provision. It was not a promotion of laziness or gluttony, but was based upon human need. This provision only allowed for the “ripe” grains to be plucked and only allowed for what their need was at the time. It was therefore limited to “amount” and “kind.” It was not open-ended.

One must remember that if they abused the privilege that was given, they would be guilty of stealing, not only from the individual Israelite, but God himself. But, if he limited himself within the legal provision, he would not be considered stealing anything. It was his to take but only to a degree. Interesting are the words of Matthew Henry at this verse:

“It provided for the support of poor travelers, and teaches us to be kind to such, teaches us to be ready to distribute, and not to think every thing lost that is given away. **Yet it forbids us to abuse the kindness of friends, or to take advantage of what is allowed.** Faithfulness to their engagements should mark the people of God; and they should **never encroach upon others.**”

The same mercy and compassion is shown in God's law to Israel specifically directing

“his people not to reap the edges of their fields completely, not to go over the boughs of the olive tree after having harvested the crop by beating the tree, nor to gather the leftovers of their vineyards. Even if a sheaf of grain was inadvertently left in the field, this was not to be retrieved. Gleaning was the God-given right of the poor in the land, the afflicted one, the alien resident, the fatherless boy, and the widow.—Le 19:9, 10; De 24:19-21....It is evident that this arrangement for the poor of the land, while encouraging generosity, unselfishness and a willingness to share one's property to those in need in no way fostered laziness. It throws light on David's statement: ‘I have not seen anyone righteous left entirely, nor his offspring looking for bread.’ (Ps 37:25) By availing themselves of the provision made for them by the Law, even the poor, by virtue of their hard work, would not go hungry, and neither they nor their children would have to beg for bread.” (“Gleaning.” *Insight on the Scriptures*. Published by Jehovah's Witnesses.)

The parallel that can be drawn to this in relation to blood is that first, blood is the property of God. Is there any indication that God may view a small allowance of blood to be used by humans without technically breaking the command to abstain from blood? Is there a legal provision in the area of blood of this nature; one that is limited by “amount” and “kind”? Scripturally of course there is no legal provision spelled out in the area of blood. But, is that therefore all there is to consider?

Before proceeding to the next point let us take with us this much. This provision at the very least demonstrates God's willingness to share property, whether his or otherwise, under certain conditions, with those who are in need of that property. That willingness is presented because of God's mercy combined with a human need; we can be certain of that much.

GOD IS NOT PARTIAL

It is a scriptural axiom to us as Jehovah's Witnesses that God is not partial in his judicious dealings with humans. For all humans who have the SAME ASSIGNMENT AND RESPONSIBILITIES before Him, he deals with them judiciously the same. What is sin for one is sin for the other. That which he purposely does or gives for one he does not forbid to others. Such would be a display of partiality. In other words, if one person with the same assignment and responsibility before him was forbidden to do something as a deadly sin, yet another person of equal status was allowed to do such without consequence and even blessing, God could not escape the charge of judicious partiality being exhibited.

While it is true that God can do with what is His any way he pleases since it is His, that would not satisfy the charge of partiality in the above scenario, and, as we believe, God is not partial. Is this pertinent to the topic of the allowance of blood fractions below the cellular and whole plasma level? Consider this:

If it is observed that God has ordained the passing of certain fractions from the blood of the mother, through the placenta, to the fetus, is that tantamount to a legal provision for others to receive like fractions? Keep in mind that the reason the legal provision was given was ultimately because of the mercy of God and his caring for the needy among his people. Is such thinking divorced from his view of blood? Do we need a law in each and every case to demonstrate that God may be merciful and have the same attitude toward other things that are ultimately his property, in a time of need? Do we need a law to state that God may be merciful in the area of blood and allow the same thing for other humans that he has provided for the fetus, ESPECIALLY in view of that fact that he has ordained as well and good and proper for the fetus, a human being, to receive those fractions? Has God allowed the fetus fractions below the cellular and whole plasma level without consequence of sin and made the same level of fractions forbidden to us with the consequence of a deadly sin? Such would not seem reasonable and would lack spiritual discernment. It would not be in keeping with a God who expressed: "I want MERCY and not sacrifice."

In fact, if there yet remains a question or objection to this understanding, in one of the accounts that employs the words "I want MERCY and not sacrifice" supplies another important piece to this discussion. All of these considerations will work together to demonstrate why we have left the decision of blood fractions below the cellular and whole plasma level to the conscience of the individual. It will be demonstrated that to forbid this conscientious decision goes beyond the evidence available to make that forbiddance.

THE SABBATH "INCIDENT" AND WHAT IT TELLS US

Before considering the Sabbath day incident involving the disciples of Christ plucking, threshing and eating grain on the Sabbath it would be good to first know what we are dealing with in the way of restrictions and allowances that were provided and required on the different Sabbaths observed by the Israelites.

Whereas every seven days the Israelites observed a Sabbath day, there were other Sabbaths also observed. There was a Sabbath year every seven years and a special Sabbath year called the Jubilee every 50 years. There were also other special Sabbaths during the year associated with different festivals and holy observances. It is important to note that not all Sabbaths were treated alike in regard to restrictions and allowances.

Let's first look at the Sabbath observed every seven years as there are some interesting provisions that are pertinent to our discussion. What was restricted and what was allowed during this Sabbath year?

Please note what is told to us in Leviticus 25:1-7 along with pertinent comments that follow:

25 And Jehovah spoke further to Moses in Mount Si'nai, saying: 2 "Speak to the sons of Israel, and you must say to them, 'When YOU eventually come into the land that I am giving YOU, then the land must observe a sabbath to Jehovah. 3 Six years you should sow your field with seed, and six years you should prune your vineyard, and you must gather the land's produce. 4 But in the seventh year there should occur a sabbath of complete rest for the land, a sabbath to Jehovah. Your field you must not sow with seed, and your vineyard you must not prune. 5 The growth from spilled kernels of your harvest you must not reap, and the grapes of your unpruned vine you must not gather. There should occur a year of complete rest for the land. 6 And the sabbath of the land must serve YOU people for food, for you and your slave man and your slave girl and your hired laborer and the settler with you, those who are residing as aliens with you, 7 and for your domestic animal and for the wild beast that is in your land. All its produce should serve for eating.

Clearly, during this Sabbath year, people could eat from the volunteer crops that grew in the fields. The fields during this year were community property, for both men and animals to partake of. Of course, that was not the case on other years, but this year was different, it was a Sabbath year. It is clear that God did not present a contradicting command. He first stated that you could not REAP fields that year, yet you could clearly go into the fields, pluck the grain, thresh it if necessary to separate the hull from the grain and eat your fill. This was not "reaping." This was a gleaning of the fields. Reaping refers to the "cutting down" of the crop. Olive trees were not reaped, they were spoken of as "beaten." Grapes were not reaped but were spoken of as gathered. The only case of a reaping of grapes was when they were "cut" with a "sickle" (Revelation 14:15-20). "Gleaning" the edges of a field that had not been reaped involved plucking, threshing, and gathering, all a part of the harvesting process.

Notice that this Sabbath year was spoken of as a Sabbath where the LAND observed a Sabbath to Jehovah. It was a year of complete rest for the LAND, not for the Israelites themselves. Work was not forbidden for the entire year of the Sabbath year the way it was forbidden on the general Sabbath day. It was a Sabbath for the LAND to experience a complete rest as a Sabbath for the LAND to Jehovah. Did this mean that being in the fields during the Sabbath YEAR, plucking, threshing and cooking in preparation of a meal was not considered WORK by Jehovah? No, it did not mean that at all because the Israelites were not forbidden from doing WORK during the Sabbath year, except sowing, pruning and reaping. It was a Sabbath for the LAND to experience rest. To think that the restrictions and the allowances of the Sabbath YEAR carried over and applied to what was allowed and restricted on the Sabbath DAY would be a great mistake because such was clearly not the case.

For instance, on the Sabbath day, no fires were allowed to be lit. No cooking could therefore take place. Surely no one believes that cooking and fires were prohibited for the entire Sabbath year. What applied on the Sabbath year was clearly different than what applied on the Sabbath day. Is the fact that the Israelites were allowed to perform some work in the fields during the Sabbath year an indication that they could do such on the Sabbath day as well, and it not be considered work? That conclusion would surely be presumptuous. There was no legal provision for such stated on the Sabbath day although there was legal provision stated on the Sabbath year. To say one was allowed take all of the legal provision of the Sabbath year and apply it on the Sabbath day would be a great mistake because, whereas the Sabbath year did not forbid the individual Israelite to perform work, (except sowing, pruning, reaping, gathering) the Sabbath day clearly did forbid the individual Israelite from performing any work. The scriptures say:

Exodus 31:14-15

14 And YOU must keep the sabbath, for it is something holy to YOU. A profaner of it will positively be put to death. IN CASE THERE IS ANYONE DOING WORK ON IT, THEN THAT SOUL MUST BE CUT OFF FROM THE MIDST OF HIS PEOPLE. 15 Six days may work be done, but on the seventh day is A sabbath OF COMPLETE REST. It is something holy to Jehovah. ANYONE DOING WORK ON THE sabbath DAY WILL POSITIVELY BE PUT TO DEATH.

Exodus 16:22-30

22 And it came about on the sixth day that they picked up twice as much bread, two omer measures for one person. So all the chieftains of the assembly came and reported it to Moses. 23 At that he said to them: "It is what Jehovah has spoken. Tomorrow there will be a sabbath observance of a holy sabbath to Jehovah. What YOU can bake, bake, and what YOU can boil, boil, and all the surplus that there is save it up for YOU as something to be kept until the morning." 24 Accordingly they saved it up until the morning, just as Moses had commanded; and it did not stink nor did maggots develop in it. 25 Then Moses said: "Eat it today, because today is a sabbath to Jehovah. Today YOU will not find it in the field. 26 Six days YOU will pick it up, but on the seventh day is a sabbath. On it none will form." 27 HOWEVER, IT CAME ABOUT ON THE SEVENTH DAY THAT SOME OF THE PEOPLE DID GO OUT TO PICK UP, BUT THEY FOUND NONE. 28 Consequently Jehovah said to Moses: "HOW LONG MUST YOU PEOPLE REFUSE TO KEEP MY

COMMANDMENTS AND MY LAWS? 29 Mark the fact that Jehovah has given YOU the sabbath. That is why he is giving YOU on the sixth day the bread of two days. Keep sitting each one in his own place. Let nobody go out from his locality on the seventh day.” 30 And the people proceeded to observe the sabbath on the seventh day.

Exodus 20:8-11

8 “Remembering the sabbath day to hold it sacred, 9 you are to render service and you must do all your work six days. 10 But the seventh day is a sabbath to Jehovah your God. YOU MUST NOT DO ANY WORK, you nor your son nor your daughter, your slave man nor your slave girl nor your domestic animal nor your alien resident who is inside your gates. 11 For in six days Jehovah made the heavens and the earth, the sea and everything that is in them, and he proceeded to rest on the seventh day. That is why Jehovah blessed the sabbath day and proceeded to make it sacred.

Exodus 34:21

21 “Six days you are to labor, but on the seventh day you will keep sabbath. IN PLOWING TIME AND IN HARVEST YOU WILL KEEP sabbath. [Plucking and threshing are a natural part of the work done by the poor in order to glean and harvest the unrealed edges of the field.]

Deuteronomy 5:12-15

12 “Keeping the sabbath day to hold it sacred, just as Jehovah your God commanded you, 13 you are to render service and you must do all your work six days. 14 But the seventh day is a sabbath to Jehovah your God. YOU MUST NOT DO ANY WORK, YOU NOR YOUR SON NOR YOUR DAUGHTER NOR YOUR SLAVE MAN NOR YOUR SLAVE GIRL NOR YOUR BULL NOR YOUR ASS NOR ANY DOMESTIC ANIMAL OF YOURS NOR YOUR ALIEN RESIDENT WHO IS INSIDE YOUR GATES, IN ORDER THAT YOUR SLAVE MAN AND YOUR SLAVE GIRL MAY REST THE SAME AS YOU. 15 And you must remember that you became a slave in the land of Egypt and Jehovah your God proceeded to bring you out from there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm. That is why Jehovah your God commanded you to carry on the sabbath day.

Jeremiah 17:22-23

22 AND YOU MUST BRING NO LOAD OUT OF YOUR HOMES ON THE sabbath DAY; AND NO WORK AT ALL MUST YOU DO. And YOU must sanctify the sabbath day, just as I commanded YOUR forefathers; 23 but they did not listen or incline their ear, and they proceeded to harden their neck in order not to hear and in order to receive no discipline.”

It is amply clear that there was no “legal” provision for work of ANY kind on the Sabbath day. However, was everything that would be physical exertion be considered work? Evidently not from what follows.

Insight on the Scriptures under “Sabbath Day” informs us of the following:

“There was a distinction in requirements for the regular weekly Sabbath and the Sabbaths or “holy conventions” that were connected with the festivals. (Le 23:2) Generally speaking, the weekly Sabbath was more restrictive; no work, laborious or otherwise, could be done (except in the sanctuary). Even gathering wood or lighting a fire was prohibited. (Nu 15:32-36; Ex 35:3) Travel was also restricted, this apparently being based on Exodus 16:29. The Day of Atonement was likewise a time of rest from all sorts of work. (Le 16:29-31; 23:28-31) However, on the holy convention days of the festivals no laborious work, trade, or business activities could be engaged in, but cooking, festival preparations, and so forth, were allowed.—Ex 12:16; Le 23:7, 8, 21, 35, 36.”

What about then, the incident of Jesus' disciples plucking, threshing and eating a small amount of grain on the Sabbath day. Was there legal provision to do such on the Sabbath day? Since we know that there was indeed legal provision to pluck a handful of grain as you passed through another's field there was certainly reason to think they were well within their rights to do so on even on the Sabbath. Otherwise, Jesus would not have said that they were "guiltless." They did nothing wrong because the Law allowed for that to happen even on the Sabbath.

Jesus explains exactly how we can understand why this small thing that the disciples did was not a violation of the Sabbath. He did so by cleverly trapping the Pharisees in their own teachings and views. He appealed to a case where David and his men performed something that was technically unlawful for him to do. Jesus even stated what the technical law was as recorded at Luke 6:2-4:

At this some of the Pharisees said: "Why are YOU doing what is not lawful on the sabbath?" 3 But Jesus said in reply to them: "Have YOU never read the very thing David did when he and the men with him got hungry? 4 How he entered into the house of God and received the loaves of presentation and ate and gave some to the men with him, which it is **LAWFUL** for **NO ONE TO EAT BUT FOR THE PRIESTS ONLY?**"

Surely Jesus did not misrepresent what the truth was in this scenario. He obviously evaluated it correctly. If the Pharisees were without premise whatsoever in their accusation, one would have to wonder why Jesus would draw such a parallel, as that was surely not his style to find common ground with the Pharisees when they had no premise for their statements or accusations. That is overwhelmingly evident in the recorded dealings that Jesus had with the Pharisees elsewhere.

Did David do something that was technically unlawful? Yes, he did. Is that the view expressed by Jehovah's Witnesses? Yes, it is. For instance notice what is stated in the July 15, 1982 *Watchtower* on page 30:

"Also, it was technically 'not lawful for David to eat' the showbread because the Law said that this was for the priests. Yet Jehovah's high priest gave it to David. On what basis? The loaves removed from the showbread table were "holy," not to be treated as ordinary, such as by being given to a common laborer or eaten on a pleasure outing. They were to be used as food for the priests, men engaged in God's service. So when David came on what apparently was a special mission from God's anointed king, and the high priest determined that the men were ceremonially clean, it was not wrong to share the showbread. That was in accord with the basic use that God designated for it."

What do we see borne out in these comments? It WAS technically unlawful for David to eat the showbread. There was NO LEGAL provision for him to do so, yet it was NOT WRONG for him to do so. How can we harmonize such things? Really, it becomes simpler when you understand the phrase, "I want mercy and not sacrifice." In fact, that is how Jesus summed up his lesson to the Pharisees. (Matthew 12:7) What David did was technically against the law, which cannot be denied. Jesus even stated it was technically against the law, and the above *Watchtower* concurs, but there was more at work here than just the narrow view as held by the Pharisees.

Due to the mercy of God, as displayed in all of the legal provisions of his property and the property of the Israelites in general, what David did was not "wrong" in God's eyes, even though "technically" unlawful. God is merciful when there is a human "need" involved, and on that occasion there was a human need involved. But it is apparent that God specifically "allowed" for David to take the bread as the account reveals that Ahimelech made an inquiry of Jehovah to be able to do so on David's account. It was after this inquiry that Ahimelech then gave David the bread. What this demonstrates is that unless there is indication of divine permission, that which is HOLY, that which is SACRED, is not to be taken for one's own use. In this case, although technically unlawful, God gave permission to the high priest to give David the bread.

In regard to what David did, there was no robbing of Jehovah by this act. If Ahimelech had gone into the holy and taken the fresh bread that was to stay there for a whole week and used that to feed David and his men, then that would have been a sin against the institution of the bread; but as it had been taken out in the ordinary course of things, it was no robbing of Jehovah, and an inquiry was also made of Jehovah involving the situation. So there was no indiscriminate entitlement to David because he had a need, but that which was allowed had a particular status which contributed to its allowance. There was divine permission granted.

Otherwise, to think that he could indiscriminately take the bread because he was hungry, and break a law in so doing, would mean that mere hunger would be all that would be necessary to break the laws of God. Such a stance would be ridiculous to anyone who understands integrity to God in all his commands.

Also, in regard to what the disciples did, there was no indiscriminate amount of work on the Sabbath that was allowed to them. They had been given divine permission to use this “property” not their own, but only in regard to what was needed, nothing more. They broke no law. Jesus said they were guiltless and also showed that **by divine permission**, even David could break an established law. He basically argued using a literary device called by some, “from greater to less.” If what their beloved David did was OK by God, even when there was a Law in place, how could what the disciples did be wrong when there was specific provision given by God to do so?

Whereas the Law stated that on the WEEKLY Sabbath they must not do ANY work of ANY kind without qualification, none was mentioned, there were obviously allowances because of the mercy of God to do “certain” NECESSARY things and only “certain” NECESSARY things. That is what the case of Jesus’ apostles demonstrates. Although, “technically” work, it was not something God forbid on the Sabbath. He drew from an example that demonstrated a clear “bending” of the law to allow David to do something he was ordinarily forbidden to do. David remained guiltless. Jesus point was that although what the Apostles did was “technically” work, it was not the kind of work God forbid on the Sabbath, just like David did something that was technically forbidden to him but was allowed to do so by the mercy of God. God allowed “certain” kinds of work to be done on the Sabbath, even though it was technically work, because he is a merciful and reasonable God. That is the very same reason that he allowed the priests to perform a great deal of work on the Sabbath. Not because it wasn’t “work,” but because it was allowed by him as it was necessary for the atonement to take place for God’s people. Therefore, it is clear that God does not always restrict “everything” that the law, from a strict, legalistic view of that law would call for.

What Jesus did was cut the Pharisees off from both angles. He first appealed to a case where God clearly bent the law to accommodate David. Why, because David was hungry and met certain criteria to be allowed to eat the showbread. David was NOT a PRIEST. This was offered, not as a statement that his disciples broke a command of God but to help them appreciate that even in the case where there IS a law, God is willing to bend at times, UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS, that law to a DEGREE, not carte blanc, but to a degree to accommodate the NEEDS of man. Then, he hit them from the other side by relating what the priest does EVERY Sabbath. He WORKS. Yet HIS work was not FORBIDDEN. Why? Because God allowed CERTAIN kinds of WORK of NECESSITY on the weekly Sabbath. These two sides of the argument completely disarmed the Pharisees because they had no where to turn to condemn the disciples. They knew what Jesus said about David was true, God did bend the law for David there is no doubt, and they were not about to condemn David in the same breath along with the disciples, EVEN IF THEY DID FEEL THEY BROKE Sabbath LAW, because then David would be condemned along with them. They also knew that because of the work the priest does, Jesus was right in indicating that works of NECESSITY were allowed because of the reasonableness and mercy of God. They had no way to come back to him because he covered the bases of their strict, legalistic view of the Law. They could not condemn the disciples because they were in effect guiltless from both standpoints. What an amazing stroke of genius on behalf of Jesus.

Up to this time, the Pharisees could argue: “It is irrational to allow the disciples to ‘pluck’ and ‘thresh’ on the Sabbath when the law says that you must not do ANY SORT of work. How can you perform WORK and yet abide by the Sabbath? It is irrational.”

But, Jesus took that rug out from under them in a twofold sweep. He first demonstrated from a “great to less” lesson, that there was no way to condemn the disciples and then demonstrated that not everything that could be called WORK was condemned by God via the high priest and his duties on the Sabbath. In both cases, where it would appear that laws would be broken, divine permissions were the precedent for allowing such to take place. Likewise, with the gleaning of a handful of grain from someone’s field as you walked through it. It was a divine permission that otherwise, would be both stealing and in this case, work on the Sabbath. It was God’s PERMISSION that was the common denominator in all these instances.

However, those allowances did not erase the entire law of God concerning the showbread or the Sabbath. They were still very much intact and not “indiscriminately” violated.

So what we have before us is this:

1. The Law stated that the Israelites were not to do ANY work on the weekly Sabbath.
2. Certain physical exertion/work (plucking, threshing, priestly duties, the saving of a life) were allowed on the Sabbath, all based upon the merciful allowances and permissions of God.

Conclusion: Not everything that could technically be labeled work was forbidden on the Sabbath. This either means that God did not consider these things to be “work” because of their nature, or he considered it such a small fraction of the whole that its usage would not be a violation of its divine purpose.

This does not mean that God allowed the disciples to break his Law, it means that he did not consider what the disciples did as a PART of the Law against working on the Sabbath because he specifically allowed for them to do so without restriction on the Sabbath. It was not forbidden work.

The only objection to date raised against this understanding of the Sabbath/work scenario is that it is claimed that God provided a list to the Jews in the form of a Judaic Sabbatical Code as to what was considered forbidden work and what was not. However, no list of course has been forthcoming. Numerous implications have been presented but none that produces this list as claimed. It is therefore an empty claim.

The main implication has been made to try to show that “gleaning” was allowed on the weekly Sabbath because it was allowed on the seven-year Sabbath, but such a comparison is committing the error of irrelevance because we have already seen that simply because something was allowed on the seven-year Sabbath, does not mean that it was allowed on the weekly Sabbath. It is a comparison of apples and oranges. Therefore the above conclusions about the Sabbath Law in relation to all forms of work stands unrefuted unless it can be demonstrated otherwise.

What bearing however, does this have on the command to abstain from blood? That is what we shall consider next.

THE COMMAND TO ABSTAIN FROM BLOOD

The Law that was stated that gave the disciples the right to “work” in the sense of gathering a handful of grain and thresh it in their hands did not mention the Sabbath. In fact, until this incident recorded for us in the word of God was presented, we would have had no precedent to assume such was allowed on the weekly Sabbath, but now we know that it was because of this incident. It was by the permission of God that these ones could glean a

handful on the Sabbath or any day. Without that incident and the defense presented by Christ, we would not have known of such an allowance. Therefore, that incident established a “precedent” for us to realize that “certain” work was allowed, either because God did not consider it work at all or he allowed a fraction of work out of mercy toward humans.

Do we, however, have anything that might serve as a precedent that Jehovah exercises a like mercy in the area of abstaining from blood? By way of a scriptural account, no we do not. Does that mean therefore there is no precedent for allowing anything in connection with blood to be used by humans? Not necessarily so. Please consider the following.

Some would say in regard to what is seen in the womb, that we have a divine precedent of allowance expressed by that divinely ordained arena.

Divine revelation comes to us not only through his inspired words but also through what is revealed by means of his own creation. Such revelation through his own creation is so strong that it leaves the unbeliever without excuse, according to Romans 1:20:

“For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.” (*KJV*)

What is seen in the arena of the womb? What is seen is the allowance of fractions derived from blood that exist below the cellular and whole plasma level. When that is observed, one also considers that God is not partial and He is judiciously consistent. From that they may decide for themselves, with prayerful consideration, whether they will avail themselves of the same kind of fractions, or at the same level that is observed in the womb, that is, fractions from blood below the cellular and whole plasma level.

A parallel then is seen between the command to abstain from work and the command to abstain from blood.

God allowed certain physical exertions which he either considered not work and therefore not in violation of the Sabbath Law or He allowed such “work” out of mercy for mankind. There was precedent to establish such due to the incident of the disciples plucking and threshing grain on the Sabbath in order to grab a handful of food. It was a small fraction of work that was performed that God did not hold them accountable for in regard to the Law of the Sabbath to abstain from ALL work. It was permitted by divine grant which otherwise would have been stealing and working on the Sabbath.

Might God allow certain things from blood that he either considers small enough to not constitute blood or could He allow such “blood” out of mercy for mankind? Some see what transpires in the womb as evidence for such an understanding and an allowance. Unless due cause can be shown to overturn this reasoning, no one should fault their decision to do so. To insist they must have a specific legal provision to do so smacks of a Pharisaical mindset. Although there was legal provision for what the disciples and high priest did, there was no legal provision for what David received. It was only upon divine permission against an established law that he was allowed to do so. Based upon the mercy and permission of God, there was no guilt to the disciples, to David or the high priest.

Does that mean that we therefore have the right to indiscriminately use blood if a need is established? No. To make that claim would mean that the disciples could have indiscriminately depleted the man's field on the Sabbath as long as they could have claimed a need to do so, or that David could have violated the law of God based on mere hunger. Such an action would be a deliberate misuse of the mercy of God. Never would anyone want to be presumptuous when relying upon the mercy of God.

For instance, in proof that human need and God's subsequent mercy do NOT overturn the "complete" law on any matter, is the account offered in the July 15, 1982 *Watchtower*. It has this to say on page 31:

"Contrast this with the incident when Israelite soldiers in Saul's army violated God's law on blood, as related at 1 Samuel 14:32-35. They had been in battle with the Philistines, enemies of Jehovah's people. Tired and hungry from the fight, some Israelites slaughtered animals and "fell to eating along with the blood." Whether it is claimed that this was a case of satisfying a powerful hunger or that it was an emergency situation, breaking the law on blood was not excusable. It was 'sinning against Jehovah' and it called for special sacrifices in behalf of those who 'sinned against Jehovah by eating along with the blood."

An important point to note here with this incident is that these men were near death. A thorough reading of that account clearly reveals that, yet their eating of the blood was NOT allowed without committing a sin, even in the face of death. Why? They had no divine permission to do so. Blood was God's sacred property and he did not permit them to misuse it even in the face of death.

Therefore, we will not move past what we have precedent to do, that being which we see demonstrated in the womb. To do that would be to presume without precedent to do so. We must obey the command to "abstain from blood" even in the case of need, yet, one may decide to avail themselves of the same kind of allowance that is demonstrated in the womb, which is the allowance of fractions below the whole plasma and cellular level.

CONCERNING OBJECTIONS TO THE VIEW PRESENTED

What of the question that has been posed as such: "If every part of blood could therefore be used, theoretically leaving nothing behind once fractionated, how can it be said that we are abstaining from blood?"

In answer let us first note this: No one has ever taken a volume of blood and used every last piece of that blood in a fractionated form nor will such a thing feasibly ever be the case. Such would be a deliberate and indiscriminate misuse of that blood because they simply do not NEED it. Even if we so decide to take the fractions, we only take what is deemed necessary, nothing more. In effect, the rest is still in the possession of God. We do not presume to use any thing more than what is absolutely needed and absolutely precedented for use since blood belongs to God and he has the jurisdiction over it.

It would be much the same when we look at the situation that God allowed in regard to what the disciples did on the Sabbath. God allowed a tiny fraction of that field to be plucked, threshed and eaten on the Sabbath without a violation of the command to abstain from work or without being guilty of stealing. Theoretically though, just as in the above example of blood, if any portion of that field was available, then theoretically it was ALL available in a fractionated form and any portion or all of it in enough fractionated handfuls by enough different people could be plucked without ever violating the Sabbath if they ALL did it in the manner that the disciples did it. The entire field would have been plucked and threshed and no one person would have violated the Sabbath command to abstain from work if they had all performed their handful as did each disciple.

However, is such a thing even plausible? Would it not have taken a deliberate and concerted effort to deplete that man's entire field and a deliberate misuse and abuse of God's provision allowing what he did on the Sabbath? Of course it would and the same is true of the blood scenario. The question is a hypothetical conundrum invented for the purpose of trying to find any way possible to negate the validity of our view. It is Pharisaical. It never has and never will happen because it would take a deliberate abuse of the mercy of God to perform such a thing to begin with. To do such would have to be deliberate, just like the depletion of that man's field would have to be deliberate, and therefore punishable by abusing the mercy of God as an excuse to

indiscriminately do as you wish for whatever purpose just to show it could be done. God's mercy does not allow for such things.

WHAT OF MOTHER'S MILK?

What of the argument: What happens at the mother's breast is a divinely arranged arena. With a certainty white blood cells are transferred from mother to child by the medium of the mammary gland.

Is this indication that blood at the cellular level should be acceptable in cases of need? To answer this one needs to take a close look at what is happening within the mammary gland and see what it demonstrates for us as regards white blood cells as they are found in blood.

At the start it must be said that I am certainly no scientist, so much of what is presented is based upon that which is stated by those that are, and I will present their statements as I have found them through research.

If man is able to imitate a transference of that which is part of blood, by whatever means, that takes place naturally within a God-ordained system in regards to blood, such as the womb scenario or the arena of the mammary gland, one could feasibly argue for their acceptance through ingesting or through some form of transfusion therapy.

From the outset, it is clear that although we can imitate the process of the womb, that of separating fractions from the primary components, before being introduced to the "other" person, what takes place in the mammary gland before those former blood components are introduced into the "other" person, cannot be duplicated by man. If man could take white blood cells and perform the morphological and essential differences that the body does before introducing them to the "other" person, then such a process might be argued just as the fractional argument is presented from the standpoint of the womb scenario, but, such is not possible for man to do. Man cannot make milk constituents from white blood cells. He cannot perform the morphological and essential differences that the body performs upon the white blood cells before they enter the "other" person as constituents of milk. Therefore, if the natural process as reflected in the mammary gland cannot be imitated by man, it is hardly valid to use that arena as a basis for invading the blood stream and using white blood cells as they are found in blood because that is not what the body does via the mammary gland. Those cells undergo significant changes for the sole purpose of being inclusive in milk.

These morphological and essential changes are amply clear in the following scientific observations: (all underscore added)

Excerpts from:

**HUMAN MILK IMMUNOLOGY
IN RELATION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF
COW'S MILK ALLERGY IN THE BREAST-FED**

Kirsi-Marjut Järvinen

Department of Dermatology, Skin and Allergy Hospital

University of Helsinki

Helsinki, Finland

Mononuclear phagocytic cells. In the milk of healthy women delivered full-term, the predominant cellular component (60 to 90% of milk cells) is the macrophage (Smith and Goldman 1968, Ho et al. 1979, Eglinton et al. 1994), with a morphology resembling that of tissue macrophages (Pitt 1979).

Despite expressing the monocyte markers Leu-M 3 and Leu-M 5, they also appear phenotypically more similar to tissue macrophages (Xanthou 1997). Additionally, occasional monocyte are found (Smith and

Goldman 1968, Ho et al. 1979). The structural and functional characteristics of breast milk macrophages are not completely defined. They display unusual morphology, including many lipid-filled vacuoles, milk fat globules, and casein micelles (Smith and Goldman 1968, Smith et al. 1971, Crago et al. 1979, Ho et al. 1979, France et al. 1980, Baldus et al. 1995). Studies of mothers that have delivered preterm and at full term have shown that milk macrophages are a fully mature tissue macrophage population (Rodriguez et al. 1989). They adhere to glass, although less than do their counterparts in peripheral blood (Miler et al. 1990). They are activated, as indicated by their high motility (Özgaragoz et al. 1988), but their migratory activity and chemotaxis have also been shown to be significantly less than those of less mature blood monocytes (Clemente et al. 1986, Thorpe et al. 1986, Rodriguez et al. 1989). They have been demonstrated to mount a respiratory burst after in vitro stimulation (Tsuda et al. 1984, Cummings et al. 1985, Speer et al. 1985; 1986). Activation, as indicated by induction of the oxidative burst and prostaglandin production, has been suggested to occur through the IgA receptors they contain (Robinson et al. 1991). Moreover, they show high phagocytic activity (Smith and Goldman 1968, Goldman and Smith 1973, Rodriguez et al. 1989), but the number of particles engulfed per cell has been reported to be markedly lower than for blood leucocytes (Miler et al. 1990). They have also been demonstrated to kill ingested *Candida Albicans* (Cummings et al. 1985). That they exhibit strongly carbohydrate antigens in addition to peptide ones may be the result of cytokine-mediated stimulation or increased phagocytic activity (Baldus et al. 1995). They also possess the capability of producing toxic oxygen radicals for intracellular killing of microorganisms (Tsuda et al. 1984). Some authors suggest that, as elsewhere in the body, human milk macrophages may provide the first line of defense against pathogens (Waksman 1979). Neutrophils. According to the literature, neutrophils are rare in human milk (8-28%) in breast-feeding mother (Smith and Goldman 1968, Eglinton et al. 1994). However, one author reports a high 40-60% of neutrophils (Ho et al. 1979, Crago et al. 1979). Human milk polymorphonuclear cells are functionally exudate cells with less locomotive, adherence, microbicidal, and stimulated respiratory burst capabilities than those of their counterparts in blood (Ho and Lawton 1978, Kohl et al. 1980, Weaver et al. 1984, Thorpe et al. 1986, Buescher and McIlheran 1993, Grazioso and Buescher 1996).

In the studies using flow cytometry, the mean CD4+ and CD8+ ratio of T cells in human milk has been reported to be 1, meaning that the proportion of CD8+ cells is higher than in peripheral blood (Wirt et al. 1992, Eglinton et al. 1994). However, an older study using indirect immunoperoxidase staining and monoclonal antibodies claimed the ratio was 1.6 (Jain et al. 1991). Further, milk T cells have 2- to 3-fold higher percentages of activated CD8+ (HML-1+ or VLA-1+) cells than does blood (Gibson et al. 1991, Eglinton et al. 1994).

Natural killer (NK) cells. NK cells represent a small proportion of colostrum cells and display low cytotoxic activity (Moro et al. 1985, Wirt et al. 1992). In contrast to peripheral blood, the majority of colostrum NK cells exhibited a degenerated appearance with many vacuoles and no electron-dense granules (Moro et al. 1985).

Also we have these comments from others:

Representative Immune Factors in Human Milk Whose Production Is Delayed in the Recipient Infant.

The cells in milk, predominantly leukocytes, were initially considered to be the “mother’s gift to the infant,” but most studies examining milk cells have shown their functional inferiority to cells obtained from the blood (Prentice et al, 1987, Oksenberg et al, 1985, Buescher & McIlheran 1993; Thorpe et al, 1986). In addition, examination of the effects of milk exposure on fully functional cells (Grazioso & Buescher, 1996) plus better insight into the physiology and function of leukocytes now suggests

precisely the opposite interpretation, i.e., that milk cells are not intended to function in the recipient infant.

Also this:

The Journal of Immunology, Vol 132, Issue 2 684-689, Copyright © 1984 by American Association of Immunologists

Secretion of immunoglobulin A by human milk leukocytes initiated by surface membrane stimuli

Thus, IgA is released from human milk leukocytes by secretory mechanisms that are initiated by certain membrane stimuli, some of which are shared by peripheral blood neutrophils and monocytes. Because human milk leukocytes appear to be refractory to C5a or other activated complement components and are blocked by cytochalasin B, it appears that these unusual cells may be uniquely adapted to play a role in the immunologic protection of the neonate.

Cellular Defenses

As is true of defensive molecules, immune cells are abundant in human milk. They consist of white blood cells, or leukocytes, that fight infection themselves and activate other defense mechanisms. The most impressive amount is found in colostrum. Most of the cells are neutrophils, a type of phagocyte that normally circulates in the bloodstream. Some evidence suggests that neutrophils continue to act as phagocytes in the infant's gut. Yet they are less aggressive than blood neutrophils and virtually disappear from breast milk six weeks after birth. So perhaps they serve some other function, such as protecting the breast from infection.

The next most common milk leukocyte is the macrophage, which is phagocytic like neutrophils and performs a number of other protective functions. Macrophages make up some 40 percent of all the leukocytes in colostrum. They are far more active than milk neutrophils, and recent experiments suggest that they are more motile than are their counterparts in blood. Aside from being phagocytic, the macrophages in breast milk manufacture lysozyme, increasing its amount in the infant's gastrointestinal tract. Lysozyme is an enzyme that destroys bacteria by disrupting their cell walls.

In addition, macrophages in the digestive tract can rally lymphocytes into action against invaders. Lymphocytes constitute the remaining 10 percent of white cells in the milk. About 20 percent of these cells are B lymphocytes, which give rise to antibodies; the rest are T lymphocytes, which kill infected cells directly or send out chemical messages that mobilize still other components of the immune system. Milk lymphocytes seem to behave differently from blood lymphocytes. Those in milk, for example, proliferate in the presence of *Escherichia coli*, a bacterium that can cause life-threatening illness in babies, but they are far less responsive than blood lymphocytes to agents posing less threat to infants. Milk lymphocytes also manufacture several chemicals—including gamma-interferon, migration inhibition factor and monocyte chemotactic factor—that can strengthen an infant's own immune response.

What have we seen from the above?

“their migratory activity and chemotaxis have also been shown to be significantly less than those of less mature blood monocytes”

“They display unusual morphology, including many lipid-filled vacuoles, milk fat globules, and casein micelles”

“but the number of particles engulfed per cell has been reported to be markedly lower than for blood leucocytes”

“milk T cells have 2- to 3-fold higher percentages of activated CD8+ (HML-1+ or VLA-1+) cells than does blood”

“In contrast to peripheral blood, the majority of colostrum NK cells exhibited a degenerated appearance with many vacuoles and no electron-dense granules”

“but most studies examining milk cells have shown their functional inferiority to cells obtained from the blood”

“it appears that these unusual cells may be uniquely adapted to play a role in the immunologic protection of the neonate”

“Yet they are less aggressive than blood neutrophils”

“recent experiments suggest that they are more motile than are their counterparts in blood”

“they are far less responsive than blood lymphocytes to agents posing less threat to infants”

I think it is safe to say that a leukocyte in milk is not the same as a leukocyte in blood. To extract milk leukocytes from the breast as “milk” is entirely different than extracting white blood cells from blood and ingesting them. There are now milk leukocytes, having been altered divinely by that which He created within the mammary. There are essentially different than the blood leukocytes. If one extracted a milk leukocyte and ate it and extracted a blood leukocyte from blood and ate it they would be eating two essentially different things. The only precedent that this might set for the Christian is if there was a way to imitate the natural process that the body performs upon these white cells before introducing them to the “other” person. It surely does not draw a parallel with using white blood cells as they are found in blood since that is not what the body does via the mammary gland.

It has also been argued that because during mastitis, whole plasma or blood cells can pass from mother to child, that this should allow for the use of whole blood or major components in transfusion therapy.

To this it is stated that one could hardly use a scenario that is the result of Adamic sin, resulting in disease and imperfection, as a divinely intended arena for transfer between mother and child. This would be tantamount to saying that because God allows spontaneous abortion, that we should be able to perform abortion at our discretion. If it is argued that abortion could be permissible upon the event of the unavoidable death of either the mother or the child or both, such as a tubal pregnancy, and therefore, the taking of blood would be permissible in the event of possible death, the difference is this. In the event of an abortion made to actually SAVE a life is not the violation of a law of God in allowing one or the other to die. That is surely not tantamount to “killing” one of them when both or one would have naturally died left in their current state. In saving the life of one or the other, no command of God is violated. It's not the taking of a life but rather the saving of a life that transpires.

In the event of blood it is different, because even in the face of death, as related at 1 Samuel 14:32-35, there would be a violation of God's law, which would be using God's sacred property without divine permission. You would violate the law to abstain from blood, whereas in the abortion case, no law would be jeopardized as the efforts are to SAVE life, not take it.

POURING THE BLOOD ONTO THE GROUND AS WATER

It is apparent from what we have considered that God has possession over blood, he has commanded that we abstain from it, so we must only use it in a manner that we see having divine precedent. From a biblical standpoint that includes “sacrifice” for the forgiveness of sin. Except for what one might see as a merciful allowance of the kind of fractions demonstrated in the womb (see above) the only other use allowed by man was for the purpose of forgiveness of sin through sacrifice.

The command to pour the blood onto the ground as water was primarily for the purpose of giving the blood back to God. The one sacrificing the animal for food or otherwise demonstrated by his action that they were giving the “life” of that animal back to God. The blood represented the “life” that was owed to God. Those who wanted to eat meat were instructed to take it to the priests to be first slaughtered as a “communion sacrifice” before they were given their portion to eat. The priest was to pour the blood onto the ground as water in symbol of that life being poured out to Jehovah. Even the case of an animal caught while hunting to be used for food, the hunter had to pour the blood onto the ground in symbol of it being given back to God.

Again the question has arisen: Since Jehovah's Witnesses can use all of the blood after fractionation, what is left to pour out to Jehovah? As was stated before, this question presents an unrealistic and impractical scenario, one that never has and never will play out in real life experiences. (See above.) Since Jehovah's Witnesses have never used and never would use all of another's blood or even a volume of blood in a fractionated state, using only what they would individually need, they show their appreciation for the fact that all blood belongs to God and they will only accept what God mercifully allows and nothing more, rejecting the rest as it were to the possession of God. As long as we hold intact the practice of giving to God what is his, it matters not whether it is technically poured onto the ground. Since all blood belongs to him, in one's using a perceived merciful allowance of only what is needed and nothing more, God retains what is his. Therefore the principle of what was accomplished by pouring the blood on the ground is maintained.

BLOOD DONATION

Why then do Jehovah's Witnesses not donate blood since it could be used for fractionation purposes? Primarily it seems to be because we as Jehovah's Witnesses cannot reasonably guarantee its proper use once donated. If it could be guaranteed that the blood donated would be for the purpose of fractionation, only then would it appear to be up to the individual to decide, but such a guarantee could prove to be an impossible task in many situations.

AUTOLOGOUS “CURRENT THERAPY” USE OF BLOOD

It has also been objected that Jehovah's Witnesses are inconsistent when it comes to allowing the reentering of autologous (one's own) blood back into the body after it has been removed and treated with medicine or some other purpose and then transfused back into the body. They regard this as a transfusion of one's own blood and state that it is therefore inconsistent with our views elsewhere.

The answer to this lies in the designation of a “current therapy.” For a long time now, Jehovah's Witnesses have made it a matter of conscience that blood removed from the body to pass through certain equipment for whatever purpose was a matter of conscience, such as a dialysis machine which would perform the function of the kidney. This was all a part of a current therapy. It was never the removal and storage of one's blood for some later use that could be considered part of a current therapy or treatment.

The reasoning for this allowance is that there would be no significant difference if this blood was sectioned off in a machine for treatment than if it was removed into a test tube or another piece of equipment to transport it to where the same or similar treatment could be performed and then immediately or within the same therapy or treatment be put back into the body. It has never been a concern whether or not the blood was being sectioned

off by valves or chambers in these machines that are directly connected to the body, because that has always been the case. What makes the difference if it is sectioned off in a machine or in a test tube or vial for the same purpose and then put back into the body performing manually what the machine would have performed mechanically? Because of that, it is now a matter of conscience for the individual Witness to decide if such a therapy would violate their conscience.

OBSERVATION

It therefore seems, everything having been said, that at times, Jehovah's Witnesses are being judged because of their understanding of the mercy of God in relation to divine law. It would seem that those who promote the above arguments against the use of blood fractions below the cellular and whole plasma level would be more apt to see the rationale behind absolute refusal of ANYTHING from blood. To them, that would be rational. And that would be fine for "them," for this is not a "defined" area; it is one that is up to the conscience of the individual. However, in regard to those who oppose us, because we try to be keen to ways that might reflect a more divine view of law and mercy and its connection with human need, especially in an area that is life-threatening, we are judged. But that judgment ignores the mercy of God that manifested itself when it came to human need and a law that would affect that need. Therefore, if we, as humans, can mimic in some mechanical fashion the transfusion of that which occurs naturally between mother and child when it comes to blood components and/or fractions, and God is not judiciously partial, then accepting blood fractions below the cellular and whole plasma level is certainly feasible. However, comparing the transfusion or ingesting of white cells as they occur in blood to the ingesting of milk leukocytes which have been morphologically and essentially adapted to be included in mother's milk misses the target completely. (See above.) Man cannot imitate through any mechanical means the bringing about of the morphological and essential changes that "naturally" take place in the mammary gland before those former blood components are introduced into the baby. Therefore the comparison attempted does not work, until such time as they are able to do what the body does naturally, even if it is done mechanically, but then, even if they did, what they would have would be constituents of "milk" and of course when it comes to constituents of milk, they could drink until their heart is content.

2) Pre-Law Society and the Apostolic Decree

What can we gather from the evidence available, prior to the Law Covenant (pre-Law), that would inform as to the view that would have been held by the pre-Law society in regard to blood? Also, how does this relate to the Apostolic Decree statement to "abstain from blood and from things strangled"?

As is true in most areas of doctrinal interpretation, there are different schools of thought that will continuously be debated. When it comes to the Noachian Decree and the Apostolic Decree, we will be examining three basic views within the scope of these four sections. In THIS section we will examine TWO views.

One view states that the Noachian Decree only applies to animals "killed for food," and that Noah would not have regarded blood to be a "sacred" fluid that belongs to God and in his jurisdiction as to how it could be used. The thought is that the blood of animals "not killed for food" could be used in mundane and casual ways, such as for paint, or a form of grease. It is also believed that the Noachian Decree did not forbid the eating of animals already dead because they were not "killed" for food, therefore the blood within the dead carcass was not in need of being removed. It could be eaten. This is centered around their understanding of Deuteronomy 14:21:

"YOU must not eat any body dead. To the alien resident who is inside your gates you may give it, and he must eat it; or there may be a selling of it to a foreigner, because you are a holy people to Jehovah your God."

This verse and its affect upon the overall scenario will be discussed in detail below.

The other view to be considered is the view that Noah would have recognized the “sacredness” that God had attached to blood by putting it on a par or representatively equating it with the “soul” of the animal. (Genesis 9:4) Since all souls belong to God, (Ezekiel 18:4) this representatively equal fluid to the soul would also be viewed as belonging to God and therefore in his jurisdiction. This would forbid the mundane and casual use of blood as it would have attached to it a special value in the eyes of God, a sacredness. As far as how the sacred property of God should be viewed, please see the section entitled [“Law, Mercy, and the Question of Property.”](#)

There are also two main schools of thought in regard to what was addressed by the Apostolic Decree.

One view is that the Apostolic Decree was not a permanent law for Christians but was merely temporary out of regard for Jewish sensitivities toward the things mentioned in the Decree; things sacrificed to idols, blood, things strangled and fornication.—Acts 15:20.

The other view is that which holds the Apostolic Decree to be a binding decree upon Christians because of not being based upon the Mosaic Law but upon the laws that were already recognized and in place in the pre-Law society, therefore binding upon all of God's worshippers regardless of their place in history.

The focus of this presentation will not be on the two schools of thought in regards to the Apostolic Decree as to whether it was out of regard to Jewish sensitivities or in relation to pre-Law commands and principles given to man. For this discussion it is assumed that the position is that the Apostolic Decree refers to the commands and principles recognized by the pre-Law society. For a thorough discussion of that, please see the section below entitled [““Abstain from Blood” – A Command or a Concession for Jewish Sensitivities?”](#)

For this discussion it is assumed that the position is that the Apostolic Decree refers to the commands and principles recognized by the pre-Law society and is therefore binding upon Christians as a matter that can affect their salvation, as it is presented in Acts 15.

The focus of this presentation will however address the two mentioned schools of thought in regard to the Noachian Decree as that understanding will then have direct affect upon the Apostolic Decree and its ramifications for Christianity.

The third view that will be contained in another section is the teaching that the laws on blood found in the scriptures, whether Noachian, Mosaic or Apostolic only forbid the “eating” of blood for food, but did not specifically forbid the taking of the blood into the body as BLOOD, rather than food. Since the scriptures do not differentiate that aspect, this view holds that it should be up to the individual Christian whether or not they could accept blood as “blood”, either in its whole state or in regard to its major components, being red cells, white cells, platelets and plasma. Please see the section entitled [““Abstain from Blood” – Noachian? Jewish? Christian? Or all of the above? The Underlying Principle“](#) for a thorough discussion of the third view mentioned.

THE PRE-LAW VIEW OF BLOOD

The earliest mention of blood is found in the account of Abel's death. There we see that God placed the blood of Abel as representative of his soul. Genesis 4:10: “At this he said: ‘What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground.’”

From this earliest recording we can see that God considered Abel's blood as he would have considered the “soul” of Abel, for surely, in reality, it was the soul of Abel that was crying out for justice, not his literal blood.

Does this tell us something about God's view of blood? Not explicitly, but this certainly implies how God viewed the blood of Abel to be representatively equal to his "soul." Is the reason God viewed the blood to be representatively equal to the soul only due to the fact that Abel was slaughtered, or is it because God viewed blood as the soul, regardless of whether the soul had been slaughtered or not? In other words, did the blood only represent the soul, the life in the event of untimely death or did it represent the soul, the life while the soul was still living as well?

The language of Genesis 9:3-6 becomes important in this consideration because this is where we see explicit stipulations concerning blood and its relation to the soul.

Genesis 9:

"Every moving animal that is alive may serve as food for YOU. As in the case of green vegetation, I do give it all to YOU. 4 Only flesh with its soul—its blood—YOU must not eat. 5 And, besides that, YOUR blood of YOUR souls shall I ask back. From the hand of every living creature shall I ask it back; and from the hand of man, from the hand of each one who is his brother, shall I ask back the soul of man. 6 Anyone shedding man's blood, by man will his own blood be shed, for in God's image he made man."

Notice the implication of verse 4 where it states "only flesh with its soul—its blood" should not be eaten. This parallel between blood and the soul was drawn in respects to the "living" animal. In other words, the blood represented the soul of the "living" animal while it was still IN the animal and had to be poured out of the animal because of the fact that it represented the soul/life of the animal. In other words, the blood was equated with the soul BEFORE the animal was ever slaughtered. This strongly implies that the blood represents the soul, not just upon the event of slaughter, but while the animal was alive and well.

This same view is explained in more detail in the Law of Moses, not as one of the laws, but the **reason** why blood was not to be eaten. It is stated there in Leviticus 17:11:

"For the soul of the flesh is in the blood, and I myself have put it upon the altar for YOU to make atonement for YOUR souls, because it is the blood that makes atonement by the soul."

Notice the statement that the "soul" of the flesh is IN the "blood." This is stated in regard to the living animal and is given as the reason why the blood of a living animal has atoning value because it represents "life" which is owed to God via sin. One would have to wonder how much more explicit it would have to be stated to show that God here held blood on a par with the soul, with the intelligent life of the being. Blood represented the "soul" of the animal, regardless of whether the animal was alive or being slaughtered. The burden of proof would clearly lie with those who say otherwise that blood only represents life at the point of slaughter.

For a thorough treatment of the obvious sacred nature of blood, please see the section entitled: ["Abstain from Blood" – Noachian? Jewish? Christian? Or all of the above? The Underlying Principle.](#)

The above findings underscore the view that God places a certain sacredness upon blood through its representational equivalence with the soul, since "life" in general is sacred to God. What do commentators and scholars have to say in regards to blood and the pre-Law society based upon the Noachian decree? Do they concur with the above findings? Yes, many do.

For instance: (all emphasis added)
Smith's Bible Dictionary:

Blood

To blood is ascribed in Scripture the mysterious sacredness which belongs to life, and God reserved it to himself when allowing man the dominion over and the use of the lower animals for food. Thus reserved, it acquires a double power: (1) that of sacrificial atonement; and (2) that of becoming a curse when wantonly shed, unless duly expiated. (Genesis 9:4; Leviticus 7:26; 17:11-13)

John Calvin:

4. But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof Some thus explain this passages 'Ye may not eat a member cut off from a living animal,' which is too trifling. However, since there is no copulative conjunction between the two words, blood and life, I do not doubt that Moses, speaking of the life, added the word blood exegetically,²⁸⁸ This is apparent in the English version, where the words, "which is," are added in Italics, showing that in the judgment of the translators, the word following was explanatory of that which preceded. - Ed. as if he would say, that flesh is in some sense devoured with its life, when it is eaten imbued with its own blood. **Wherefore, the life and the blood are not put for different things, but for the same; not because blood is in itself the life, but inasmuch as the vital spirits chiefly reside in the blood, it is, as far as our feeling is concerned, a token which represents life.**

fnnt 288: This is apparent in the English version, where the words, "which is," are added in Italics, showing that in the judgment of the translators, the word following was explanatory of that which preceded. — Ed.

New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge-Volume 3:

Dietary Laws of the Hebrews

Essentially different in principle is the prohibition against consuming the blood and the fat of (clean or edible) animals. **The blood is not unclean in itself; on the contrary, it is the precious vital fluid which is offered to God as the worthiest portion of the animal creature. Life is from God and belongs to God.** On account of its intimate relation to life, men shall not swallow the blood, but shall consecrate it to God. By this very property, too, blood is also the appropriate means of atonement, can intercede for men, can be offered to God in their place—"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" (Lev. xvii. 11). For this reason care must be observed in the slaying that the blood may escape. Nothing lacerated or smothered is allowed to be eaten, because in that case the blood has not properly escaped. This practice of avoiding to partake of blood is very ancient (Gen. ix. 4).

The Noahic Covenant—A New Beginning

(Genesis 8:20-9:17)

By: Bob Deffinbaugh, Th.M.

A New Beginning

(9:1-7)

Ray Stedman titles these verses (and verses 8-17) "Rules of the Game,"⁹⁷ and I think he has truly caught the significance of this section. A new beginning, with a new set of rules, is evident by the similarity of these verses to Genesis chapter one.

Here (Genesis 9:1) and there (Genesis 1:28) God blessed His creatures and told them to be fruitful and multiply. Here (Genesis 9:3) and there (Genesis 1:29-30) God prescribed the food man could eat.

There are differences, however, which indicate that the new beginning is to be different from the old. God pronounced the original creation 'good' (cf. 1:21, 31). The world of Noah's day received no such commendation, for the men who possessed it were sinful (8:21).

Adam was charged to subdue the earth and to rule over the animal kingdom (1:28). Noah was given no such command. Instead, God placed in the animals a fear of man by which man could achieve a measure of control over them. (The reason my dog obeys me—when he does—is because he fears me.)

While Adam and his contemporaries seem to have been vegetarians (Genesis 1:29-30; cf. 9:3), Noah and his descendants could eat flesh (9:3-4). There was, however, one stipulation. **They could not eat the blood of the animal, for the life of the animal was in its blood. This was to teach man not only that God values life, but that He owns it.** God allows man to take the life of animals in order to survive, but they must not eat the blood.

One may puzzle that flesh could be eaten after the flood, but not before (or so it seems). It may be that conditions on the earth so changed that protein was now necessary for life. More likely, man must be brought to the realization that, because of his sin, he could only live by the death of another. Man lives by the death of animals.

Most important of all, man is taught to reverence life. Men before the fall were obviously men of violence (cf. Genesis 6:11) who, like Cain (Genesis 4:8), and Lamech (Genesis 4:23-24), had no regard for human life. This is more emphatically stated in verses 5 and 6 of chapter 9: And surely I will require your lifeblood; from every beast I will require it. And from every man, from every man's brother I will require the life of man. Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God He made man.

The life of man was precious and belonged to God. It was God's to give and His alone to take. Animals which shed man's blood must be put to death (verse 5, cf. Exodus 21:28,29). Men who willfully take the life of another must be put to death 'by man' (verse 6; cf. Numbers 35:33). 98

In addition to murder, suicide is prohibited by God's command in these verses. **Life belongs to God—not only the life of animals and of others, but our own as well.** We must realize that suicide is taking our life into our own hands when God says it belongs to Him. In the words of Job, "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away" (Job 1:21).

This passage seems to shed light on the controversial subject of abortion also. Man is not to shed the blood of man. The life of man is in the blood (Genesis 9:4; Leviticus 17:11). Aside from many other considerations, must we not conclude that at the time a fetus has blood, it has life? Must we not also acknowledge that to shed this blood, to destroy this fetus, is to violate God's command and to be subject to the death penalty?

New American Bible: footnote Genesis 9:4:

Because a living being dies when it loses most of its blood, the ancients regarded blood as the seat of life, and therefore as sacred. Although in itself the prohibition against eating meat with blood in it is comparable to the ritual laws of the Mosaic Code, the Jews considered it binding on all men, because it was given by God to Noah, the new ancestor of all mankind; therefore the Christian Church retained it for a time. (Acts 15:20, 29)

The Jerusalem Bible: footnote Genesis 9b:

b. cf. Lv. 1:5+, but man's in particular because man was made to God's likeness, God will avenge human blood.

The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology:

Blood:

OT For the OT, as in the classical world, blood was the seat of life. The "soul," i.e. life, life force, is in the blood (Gen.9:4; Lev. 17:11,14; Deut. 12:23) **God is the sole Lord of all life. He is the sovereign over the blood and life of men (Ezek. 18:4)...Animal blood also belongs to God. It is holy, and consumption of blood is forbidden on pain of death.**

Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament Words:

Blood:

Dam is used to denote the blood of animals, birds and men, (never of fish). **In Gen. 9:4 it is synonymous with "life":** But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat." **The high value of life as a gift of God led to the prohibition against eating "blood."**

Gray's Home Bible Commentary:

Citation: – GENESIS CHAPTERS 6-9

Chapter Heading: – THE FIRST CLIMAX OF SIN

Headings: – God's Covenant with Noah

Text: - 8:20 to 9:19 What did Noah do on leaving the ark (v. 20)? How does this verse bear on 7:2? What indicates the acceptance of his offering, and by its acceptance that of himself (v. 21)? What divine promise was associated with this acceptance? Of course, this does not mean that no further judgment is to be visited on the earth, as may be seen by 2 Thess. 1:7-10; 2 Peter 3:10-13, and Rev. 14 to 22. Where, earlier, have we met the blessing now bestowed on Noah and his family (9:1)? What new power over the brute creation is now put into man's hands (v. 2)? If his dominion previously was that of love, of what was its nature to be henceforth? If his food previously was limited to herbs, to what is it now extended (v. 3)? But what limitation is put upon it, and why (v. 4)? To quote Pratt at this point: **"We see here that from the times of the deluge the blood was constituted a most sacred thing, devoted exclusively to God,** to make expiation on the altar of sacrifice for the sins of men (see Lev. 17:11-14).

The New Unger's Bible Dictionary:

(Heb. Dam; Gk. Haima, "the circulatory life fluid of the body"). **A peculiar sacredness was attached to the blood** because of the idea that prevailed **of its unity with the soul.** We find this **distinctively stated** (Gen. 9:4): "Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood."...

As food. When permission was given to Noah to partake of animal food (Gen. 9:4), use of blood was strictly forbidden... The prohibition of the use of blood has a twofold ground: **blood has the soul in itself,** and in accordance with the gracious ordinance of God it is the means of expiation for human souls, because of the soul contained in it. The one ground is in the nature of blood and the other **in its destination to a holy purpose,** which, even apart from that other reason, **withdraws it from a common use.**

From the above scriptures and comments of numerous scholars it is easy to see why one would view blood to be sacred fluid and in the ownership and jurisdiction of God. It is the view which best performs justice to the written word of the scriptures as is testified by the consensus of the above scholars, regardless of what other agreements or disagreements that they may have in other areas. To miss the “sacred” connection that is attached to blood is to surely miss a great deal as is witnessed by the views of the above. But there is more.

As regards the teaching that Noah was not forbidden to eat dead animals found dead, the promoters of this view pose Deuteronomy 14:21 as proof that the nations outside the Law-covenant were given specific provision to eat carcasses.

Deuteronomy 14:21:

“YOU must not eat any body dead. To the alien resident who is inside your gates you may give it, and he must eat it; or there may be a selling of it to a foreigner, because you are a holy people to Jehovah your God.”

True, it cannot be denied that Jehovah made specific provision for nations outside the Law covenant to eat carcasses. Must we therefore conclude that Jehovah also permitted Noah to eat carcasses as well and that he approved of such consumption as well and good? A closer look reveals more to the picture.

Let us return to Genesis 9:3 and see what the scripture specifically says as to what man could consider food in regard to animals.

Genesis 9:3:

“**Every moving animal that is alive** may serve as food for YOU. As in the case of green vegetation, I do give it all to YOU.”

It is clear that God only granted permission here to eat that which was alive, of course, only after it had been slaughtered and the blood drained from the flesh. There is no permission at all in regard to animals found dead as the language says they were allowed to eat that which was “alive.” It is therefore a great puzzlement how one would think that eating an animal “found dead” could be in harmony with this permission to eat only animals that were “alive.” Otherwise, why even mention the fact that they had to be alive? There would be no reason or call to do so. Surely, anyone who would hold that Noah was not allowed to eat animals found dead has valid cause to do so in regard to this scripture. To show otherwise, after such plain language, the burden of proof would be entirely in their camp.

Proof of how one should understand this verse is demonstrated when we substitute another word for “alive.” If we were to substitute the word “flying” in its place, what would happen? What the meaning of that sentence therefore be? Clearly then, man would only be allowed to eat “flying” animals, once the blood was removed. It would have naturally ruled out other animals that do not fly. Therefore, to argue that “dead” animals could be eaten violates the structure of the sentence as presented at Genesis 9:3, regardless of what follows in the following sentences dealing with the blood.

Please note the interesting comment of John Gill in regard to the language of verse three:

John Gill:

Verse 3. Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you,.... That is, every beast, fowl, and fish, without exception; for though there was a difference at this time of clean and unclean creatures with

respect to sacrifice, yet not with respect to food; every creature of God was good then, as it is now, and it was left to man's reason and judgment what to make use of, as would be most conducive to his health, and agreeable to his taste: and though there was a distinction afterwards made under the Levitical dispensation among the Jews, who were forbid the use of some creatures; yet they themselves say {k}, that all unclean beasts will be clean in the world to come, in the times of the Messiah, as they were to the sons of Noah, and refer to this text in proof of it; **the only exception in the text is, that *they must be living creatures which are taken, and used for food; not such as die of themselves, or are torn to pieces by wild beasts, but such as are taken alive, and killed in a proper manner:*** even as the green herb have I given you all things; as every green herb was given for meat to Adam originally, without any exception, Genesis 1:29 so every living creature, without exception, was given to Noah and his sons for food.

Nearly all scholars agree that mankind prior to the Flood were not permitted to eat animals and there is absolutely no scriptural indication that they did. God told Adam initially that he was given the vegetation of the field to eat. There was no mention of animals for food. To see that anywhere before the Flood is truly seeing something that is not there. Again, the burden of proof for such a view would lie heavily in their camp. Nearly all scholars across the board agree.

Wesley:

9:3 Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you – **Hitherto man had been confined to feed only upon the products of the earth**, fruits, herbs and roots, and all sorts of corn and milk; so was the first grant, Genesis 1:29. But the flood having perhaps washed away much of the virtue of the earth, and so rendered its fruits less pleasing, and less nourishing, God now enlarged the grant, and allowed man to eat flesh, which perhaps man himself never thought of 'till now.

Matthew Henry:

3. A grant of maintenance and subsistence: Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you, v. 3. **Hitherto, most think, man had been confined to feed only upon the products of the earth, fruits, herbs, and roots, and all sorts of corn and milk; so was the first grant, ch. 1:29. But the flood having perhaps washed away much of the virtue of the earth, and so rendered its fruits less pleasing and less nourishing, God now enlarged the grant, and allowed man to eat flesh, which perhaps man himself never thought of, till now that God directed him to it, nor had any more desire to than a sheep has to suck blood like a wolf. But now man is allowed to feed upon flesh, as freely and safely as upon the green herb.** Now here see, (1.) That God is a good master, and provides, not only that we may live, but that we may live comfortably, in his service; not for necessity only, but for delight. (2.) That every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, 1 Tim. 4:4. Afterwards some meats that were proper enough for food were prohibited by the ceremonial law; but from the beginning, it seems, it was not so, and therefore is not so under the gospel.

Easton's Dictionary:

Topics: Blood

Text:

(1.) As food, prohibited in Gen. 9:4, **where the use of animal food is first allowed.** Comp. Deut. 12:23; Lev. 3:17; 7:26; 17:10-14. The injunction to abstain from blood is renewed in the decree of the council of Jerusalem (Acts 15:29). It has been held by some, and we think correctly, that this law of prohibition was only ceremonial and temporary; while others regard it as still binding on all. Blood was eaten by the Israelites after the battle of Gilboa (1 Sam. 14:32-34).

Revisiting the Gray's Home Bible Commentary quotation above, another point may be highlighted:

Citation: – GENESIS CHAPTERS 6-9

Chapter Heading: – THE FIRST CLIMAX OF SIN

Headings: – God's Covenant with Noah

Text: - 8:20 to 9:19 What did Noah do on leaving the ark (v. 20)? How does this verse bear on 7:2? What indicates the acceptance of his offering, and by its acceptance that of himself (v. 21)? What divine promise was associated with this acceptance? Of course, this does not mean that no further judgment is to be visited on the earth, as may be seen by 2 Thess. 1:7-10; 2 Peter 3:10-13, and Rev. 14 to 22. Where, earlier, have we met the blessing now bestowed on Noah and his family (9:1)? What new power over the brute creation is now put into man's hands (v. 2)? **If his dominion previously was that of love, of what was its nature to be henceforth? If his food previously was limited to herbs, to what is it now extended (v. 3)? But what limitation is put upon it, and why (v. 4)?** To quote Pratt at this point: "We see here that from the times of the deluge the blood was constituted a most sacred thing, devoted exclusively to God, to make expiation on the altar of sacrifice for the sins of men (see Lev. 17:11-14).

The Liberty Bible Commentary (prepared by 13 Baptists scholars) footnote Gen. 9:1-7.

Prior to this time, God had said that every herb bearing seed...and every tree...to you it shall be for meat (1:29). Although the sinful race undoubtedly violated this prescription many times, **it was not until this period of new beginnings that God actually sanctioned the eating of meat.**

The Bible Reader's Companion:

"Food for you" (9:1-4). In the original Creation man and animals were given green plants for food. (cf. 1:29-30). **Only now, after the Flood, are living creatures given for food,** with the single condition that the blood not be eaten with the flesh.

Adam Clarke:

3. Every moving animal...shall be meat. **There is no positive evidence that animal food was ever used before the flood. Noah had the first grant of this kind,** and it has continued to all his posterity ever since.

The above helps us to see that the view that Noah and those before him could eat animals dead or alive has no foundation is in not in harmony with the comments and views of many respected scholars, regardless of what other agreements or disagreements that they may have in other areas.

Since Noah was not given permission to eat animals prior to the Flood it should be easy to see that once he was given permission, it only was in regard to animals "alive" as explained well by Gill above. Therefore, to teach that Noah could eat dead flesh is in direct contrast to what God gave him permission to eat in Genesis 9:3. To teach otherwise presents those teachers once again, with the burden of proof as the presented view is in holding with the natural reading of the scriptures involved, as attested to by the above scholars. But there is more to consider.

At this point let us introduce the Apostolic Decree in regard to blood and examine it in the light of what we have already covered and further considerations. Will it shed light upon what was allowed to the Noachian society as well? Since it is agreed within the scope of this portion that the Apostolic Decree was a reiteration of laws and principles already established by the Noachian society of worshippers, it certainly should shed some clarification upon what was practiced by the Noachian society, and that it does.

In regards to blood the Apostolic Decree says to “abstain from blood and from things strangled.” We are going to take a look at the phrase “things strangled” and what it tells us in this regard. Since it is agreed within the scope of this work that this is a binding Christian Law which expresses a binding law or principle upon the Noachian society, one must immediately ask, where is this “stipulated” within the Noachian society of laws and principles? Search as one may, I think the only relevant scripture that one will find that resembles this portion of the Apostolic Decree is Genesis 9:3 where God stipulated that you had to eat only animals that were initially “alive,” not dead, as “strangled” animals would represent animals that were NOT properly bled due to the manner in which they died, either at the hands of humans or through natural death or untimely death at the hand of another wild beast or through accidental death such as drowning. There is no way to limit the phrase “things strangled” to animals strangled by a human for food without draining the blood, as we know animals can suffer “strangulation, suffocation, drowning etc.” at the hands of nature or other animals. To limit it to just animals strangled for food is again to see something that is not in the text.

How do many commentators, scholars view the phrase “things strangled”? How did the early Christian writers view the phrase “things strangled”? In what context did they speak of it? Such comments will be beneficial in helping us to understand how they viewed the phrase and therefore the Apostolic Decree.

Please note the comments that we have available from the Ante Nicene church fathers and take notice of the context in which they speak of “things strangled.” (all emphasis added)

The Clementine Homilies Homily VII

Chapter VIII.-The Service of God's Appointment.

“And this is the service He has appointed: To worship Him only, and trust only in the Prophet of truth, and to be baptized for the remission of sins, and thus by this pure baptism to be born again unto God by saving water; **to abstain from the table of devils, that is, from food offered to idols, from dead carcasses, from animals which have been suffocated or caught by wild beasts, and from blood;**5 not to live any longer impurely; to wash after intercourse; that the women on their part should keep the law of purification; that all should be sober-minded, given to good works, refraining from wrongdoing, looking for eternal life from the all-powerful God, and asking with prayer and continual supplication that they may win it.” Such was Peter's counsel to the men of Sidon also. And in few days many repented and believed, and were healed. And Peter having founded a church, and set over it as bishop one of the elders who were with him, left Sidon.

Tertullian: THE BOOK OF APOLOGY AGAINST THE HEATHEN.

Let your sin blush before us Christians, who do not reckon the blood even of animals among meats to be eaten 118, **who for this cause also abstain from things strangled, and such as die of themselves,**119 that we may not be defiled by any blood even buried within their entrails. Finally, among the trials of the Christians, ye offer them also pudding-skins stuffed with blood, as being well assured that that, whereby ye would have them transgress, is unlawful among them. Moreover what manner of thing is it to believe that they, who ye are assured abhor the blood of beasts, pant for human blood? unless perchance ye have found it sweeter!

Pseudo-clementine

CHAPTER 19 THE LAW TO THE GIANTS OR DEMONS

“These things seem good to the all-seeing God, that you Lord it over no man; that you trouble no one,

unless any one of his own accord subject himself to you, worshipping you, and sacrificing and pouring libations, and partaking of your table, **or accomplishing aught else that they ought not, or shedding blood, or tasting dead flesh, or filling themselves with that which is torn of beasts, or that which is cut, or that which is strangled, or aught else that is unclean.** But those who betake themselves to my law, you not only shall not touch, but shall also do honor to, and shall flee from, their presence. For whatsoever shall please them, being just, respecting you, that you shall be constrained to suffer. But if any of those who worship me go astray, either committing adultery, or practicing magic, or living impurely, or doing any other of the things which are not well-pleasing to me, then they will have to suffer something at your hands or those of others, according to my order. But upon them, when they repent, I, judging of their repentance, whether it be worthy of pardon or not, shall give sentence. These things, therefore, ye ought to remember and to do, well knowing that not even your thoughts shall be able to be concealed from Him.'

It is clear from these early century comments that these "fathers" associated "things strangled" with dead carcasses, animals which have been suffocated or caught by wild beasts and those which die of themselves.

In the next few centuries we find comments and observations such as these as compiled by C. Dodgson:

C. Dodgson, Tertullian Vol. 1. Apologetic and Practical Treatises. (1842). pp.107-130. Notes A, B, C, D

NOTES TO THE APOLOGY.

Note A, p. 23. chap. ix.

THE use of blood as food, is spoken of as prohibited to Christians, in all Churches, from the earliest to the latest times. The early authorities are, Ep. Lugd. et Vienn. l. c. Clem. Paedag. iii. 3. fin. Strom. iv. 15. Tert. here and de Monogam. c. 5. Orig. c. Cels. viii. 30. p. 763. ed. de la Rue in Num. Hom. 16. v. fin. p. 334. Can. Ap. 63. Minut. F. p. 300. Cyril Jer. iv. 28. xvii. 29. S. Ambrose, (apparently) in Ps. 118. Serm. 13. §. 6. Gaudentius (de Maccab. Tr. 15. Bibl. Patr. Max. t. v. p. 967.) Ambrosiaster (ad Gal. ii. 3.) even while arguing against the Greeks, as if tw~n pniktw~n had been interpolated by them, "it having," he says, "been already expressed," things strangled were virtually comprised in the prohibition of blood; quia jam supra dictum erat, quod addiderunt.]...

In the second Council of Orleans (A. D. 533.) Catholics are excommunicated, "who should use food offered to idols, **or feed on what had been slain by beasts, or died of any disease or accident.**" Can. 20. (Conc. t. xi. p. 164.) The Council of Trullo, (Quini-Sext.) A. D. 692. Can. 67. rehearses, "Divine Scripture hath commanded to abstain from blood, and strangled, and fornication, wherefore **we punish proportionably** [*sic*]108 those who for appetite's sake, **by any act prepare the blood of any animal whatsoever, so as to be eatable. If then henceforth any essay to eat the blood of an animal in any way so ever, if a clerk, let him be deposed, if lay, excommunicated.**" Balsamon (ad Can. 67. p. 444.) notes that this Canon was directed against such as maintained that they observed the injunction of Holy Scripture in that they did not eat mere blood, but food prepared of other things with it; against which he says the Novell. 58. of the Emperor Leo, the philosopher, (A.D. 886.) was also directed, severely punishing all such.

"Things strangled" are either mentioned with blood, (as in Clem. Strom. l. c. Orig. c. Cels. l. c. Minut. F. l. c. Cyril J. l. c. &c.) **or are counted as included in it,** (as in Ambrosiaster l. c. and Aug. c. Faust. 32. 13) **"and from blood,' i. e. that they should not eat any flesh, the blood whereof was not poured out."** There would however be the difference, **that blood was forbidden by a law antecedent to the Mosaic** (which ground is given in the Const. Ap. vi. 22.) **and it may have an inherent sacredness, or there may be an inherent impropriety in eating it.** Some distinction,

accordingly, seems to be made; as when S. Augustine, controverting Faustus, maintains the Apostolic decree to be temporary only, and appeals to the practice of Christians, he instances “things strangled” only, and of these the smaller animals, in which the blood would not be perceptible. “Who among Christians now observes this, as not to touch thrushes, or other birds however small, (*minutiores aviculas*,) unless their blood had been poured out, or a hare, had it been struck on the back of the neck with the hand, not killed so as to let out blood?” (l. c.) S. Augustine’s principles go further, but he seems to have been restrained by a sort of instinct: the instances, which he gives of the violation of the Apostolic decree, are such as scarcely touch upon the use of “blood;” in which there would be the least possible blood, and that unknown to those who used the food. ...

In the West, it is noticed that Zacharia, Bishop of Rome, (A.D. 741.) in a letter to Boniface, the Abp. of Germany, (*Conc. t. xvii. p. 413.*) forbids several animals, probably on the ground of their being things strangled. 109 Humbert, Cardinal under Leo IX. (A. D. 1054.) in answering the charge of the Greeks, that they ate “things strangled,” limits the defence to cases of necessity. **“Nor, so saying, do we claim to ourselves, against you, the use of blood and things strangled. For, diligently following the ancient practice or tradition of our ancestors, we also abhor these things, so that a heavy penance is, among us, from time to time, imposed upon such as, without extreme risk of this life, eat blood, or any thing which hath died of itself, or been strangled in water, or by any carelessness of man; chiefly, because, in things not against the faith, we deem ancient customs, and the traditions of ancestors, to be Apostolic rules.** For as to the rest, which die either by hawking, or by dogs or snares, we follow the Apostle’s precept, 1 Cor. x. (*cont. Graec. Calumn. Bibl. P. t. xviii. p. 403.*) In A.D. 1124, Otto, with the sanction of Callistus II. among other rules delivered to the newly converted Pomeranians, **ordains “that they should not eat any thing unclean, or which died of itself, or was strangled, or sacrificed to idols, or the blood of animals,”** (*Urspergensis Abbas ap. Baron. A. E. t. xii. p. 156.* who adds, “more after the Greek, than the Roman, practice.”) The imposition of penance is mentioned in *Greg. 3. Can. poenit. c. 30. Bede de Remed. Pecc. 4. (ap. Bev. Vindic. Can. Ap. 63. p. 342. ed Cotel.) the Capitula Theodori, xv-xix. and others there quoted, Poenitentiale Theodori, t. i. p. 26. Richard Wormaciensis, Ep. Decret. l. 19. cap. 85. &c. (ap. Elmenhorst. ad Minut. F. l. c.) and the Concil. Wormac. c. 64, 65. (though not accounted genuine). Beveridge sums up the account, “so that what is sanctioned by this Canon, the Western Church also very long observed, the Eastern ever,” (*Cod. Can. Vind. ii. 6.*) see further his notes on the Ap. Can.; Curcellaeus, l. c. Leo Allât. l. c. Natalis Alex. H. E. t. i. Diss. xi. Suicer, v. ai]ma Elmenhorst l. c.*

Please note these comments found at the following website, available on the Internet Archive:

“The Jerusalem Decree: Acts 15:23-29” by Darrell J. Pursiful
(<http://web.archive.org/web/20060301014439/http://members.aol.com/djpursiful/jerusalemdecrees.html>)

The third prohibition deals with *pniktav*, or “strangled things.” In the present context, this is often understood to be improperly slaughtered animals, even though there is no direct evidence of the use of the word in terms of Jewish slaughtering customs.⁽¹³⁾ **Actually, a distinction is made in the Old Testament between two different kinds of improperly slaughtered animals. If an animal dies of natural causes, it is *nebela* (LXX *qnhsimai’on*), but if it is torn to pieces it is *terefa*⁽¹⁴⁾ (LXX *qhriavlwtan*). In either case, the flesh of such animals is prohibited for food (Exod 22:30; Lev 17:15; Deut 14:21). The concern is that all the blood should be drained from the carcass of an animal. If an animal is put to death in any improper way, the life (the blood) remains in the body, and so the beast has been “choked.”⁽¹⁵⁾** Philo also reflects the connection between strangled things and blood in his condemnation of pagan pleasure-seekers:

They devise novel kinds of pleasure and prepare meat unfit for the altar by strangling and throttling (ajpopnivgonte”) the animals, and entomb in the carcass the blood which is the essence of the soul and should be allowed to run freely away. (Spec. IV, 122)

Footnotes:

^{13.} Barrett, p. 53.

^{14.} *m.Hul* 3:1 defines as *terefa* any animal which could not continue to live in a similar state. At *b.Hul* 42ab we find enumerated the “eighteen defects” which render an animal *terefa*.

^{15.} Hans Bietenhard, “pnivgw, ktl,” *TDNT* VI: 457.

The point is amply demonstrated that “things strangled” was throughout the centuries regarded as including and in the same context as animals which died of themselves, were torn by beasts or were strangled through whatever means.

Please also note the following statements of scholars and commentators. Regardless of the reason they believe that the Apostolic Decree was given, they share a common thought in regard to “things strangled.” (all emphasis added)

Adam Clarke:

...and from things strangled; that is; from eating them, and design **such as die of themselves, or are torn with beasts, or are not killed in a proper way, by letting out their blood;** but their blood is stagnated or congealed in the veins: the Jews might not kill with a reaper’s sickle, nor with a saw, nor with the teeth, or nail; because these (Nyqnxw) , “strangled” F1: and **what was not slain as it should be, was reckoned all one as what dies of itself;** and whoever ate of either of these was to be beaten.

People’s New Testament:

And from things strangled - That is, **from whatever had been killed, without pouring out the blood.**

New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology:

Page 226. An animal should be so slaughtered that its blood, in which is its life, should be allowed to pour out. **If the animal has been killed in any other way, it has been “strangled.”**

Thayer’s lexicon:

pniktos: suffocated, strangled, **an animal deprived of life without shedding its blood,** Acts 15:20,29; Acts 21:25.

New Dictionary of Biblical Theology:

Page 403: In Acts 15 the Jerusalem Council instructs the early church to abstain from blood. While it is possible to interpret the Hebrew text of Genesis 9:4 as prohibiting only the consumption of blood from living animals **the council accepts what is apparently the current Jewish interpretation, seeing the same prohibition in Genesis 9:4 as in Leviticus and therefore making no distinction between what is forbidden to Jews and what is forbidden universally.**

Therefore those who hold to the view that Noah could eat animals found dead have created a catch-22 for themselves. They are on the horns of a dilemma. If they on one horn hold that the Apostolic Decree is a reflection of Noachian societal laws and principles, as we would agree, then the phrase “things strangled” MUST BE one of those laws or principles. Then on the other horn, “things strangled,” as clarified for us by early Christian writings, is only paralleled by what is stated in Genesis 9:3 where God only allows the eating of animals that were “alive,” therefore, NOT allowing things strangled and/or unbled carcass of any kind. There is therefore a very notable relationship between the two verses Acts 15:20 and “things strangled” and Genesis 9:3 which allows only the eating of live animals.

This is a dilemma for those who wish to promote the idea that Noah could eat animals found dead and therefore blood was not sacred unless it was in the event of the slaughter of the soul involved. “Things strangled,” being a reiteration of an earlier Noachian societal law or principle can only find parallel in the words of Genesis 9:3. Therefore the Apostolic Decree is very instrumental in clarifying for us the fact that Noah would not have consumed flesh already dead, therefore calling into great suspicion their interpretation of Deuteronomy 14:21 as allowing the consumption of an unbled carcass because blood was not sacred unless it was poured out in slaughter of the animal for food. “Things strangled” as a reflection of Noachian societal laws or principles rules directly against that interpretation.

What then does Deuteronomy 14:21 mean? Why did God give this provision to pagan nations in and around Israel? Again, it reads:

“YOU must not eat any body dead. To the alien resident who is inside your gates you may give it, and he must eat it; or there may be a selling of it to a foreigner, because you are a holy people to Jehovah your God.”

Does this prove that God does not care if people not under the Law ate the blood of an animal already dead? A couple of thoughts should be developed in regard to this question.

First of all, we must ask: Is the fact that God allowed Israelite men to divorce their wives on nearly any ground indicative that God does not care about the practice of divorce? Why did he allow it? Why did he specifically provide for something that he has stated elsewhere that he hates and that Jesus later clarified as not his intentions from the “beginning”? (Deuteronomy 24:1; Matthew 19:3-9; Mark 10:4-12) He obviously made a concession because of the hard-heartedness of the Israelite people, but one could never use the allowance of divorce in the Israelite setting as proof that God did not “hate” a divorcing. Likewise, with the statement that the non-proselyte foreigner in the land of Israel could purchase a carcass and eat it, that would not prove that God approved of such a practice.

God, at that point in history, was not forcing his laws and principles upon the pagan nations who were not involved in worship to Him, even those non-proselyte temporary residents within their boundaries. Because he would allow the eating of a carcass or otherwise unbled flesh to these pagan “peoples” outside of the realm of his worshippers in no way can stand as evidence that he allowed it to his worshippers in the pre-Law era. If He was willing to concede “divorce” that he “hated” even unto his own people, how can it be stated that God’s allowing a pagan to do something stands as evidence his worshippers could do it? One would surely be employing the verse in a manner that it was not intended to be employed to force that meaning upon the text.

Therefore, everything having been considered thus far, this is what we have before us in response to the view that Noah would have eaten animals found dead without qualm and without violation of God’s laws and principles, demonstrating, they say, that blood was only sacred in the event of slaughtering them for food, therefore promoting the idea that blood could be used in other mundane and common ways at the discretion of the individual, as long as he poured out the blood of an animal he killed for food.

The following is presented in a point/counterpoint fashion. The view that Noah could eat dead flesh without consequence will be the “**point.**” The response to that will be the “**counterpoint.**”

POINT:

At Deuteronomy 14:21, God allowed Israelites to sell unbled animals found already dead to be used as food by “alien residents” and “foreigners.” The Noachian Law, but not the Mosaic Law, applied to these people since they were part of mankind as a whole but not of Israel. The distinction here is between animals that humans had killed for food, which were covered by the Noachian Law, and those which had been found already dead, which we will see were not covered by the Noachian Law. Had they been covered, using them for food would have been prohibited.

COUNTERPOINT:

First of all, we must ask: Is the fact that God allowed Israelite men to divorce their wives on nearly any ground indicative that God does not care about the practice of divorce? Why did he allow it? Why did he specifically provide for something that he has stated elsewhere that he hates and that Jesus later clarified as not his intentions from the “beginning”? (Deuteronomy 24:1; Matthew 19:3-9; Mark 10:4-12) He obviously made a concession because of the hard-heartedness of the Israelite people, but one could never use the allowance of divorce in the Israelite setting as proof that God did not “hate” a divorcing. Likewise, with the statement that the non-proselyte foreigner in the land of Israel could purchase a carcass and eat it, that would not prove that God approved of such a practice.

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Also dictating against that interpretation of Deuteronomy 14:21 is the fact that God only permitted the use of animals “alive” (Genesis 9:3) for food and that the Apostolic Decree “abstain from things strangled” was Noachian Law and the “pniktos” (things strangled) was in regard to animals which died of themselves, were torn by beasts or were strangled through whatever means. This meaning of “pniktos” is unmistakably demonstrated by means of early church writings. Therefore, Noah would have had no permission to eat animals found dead or strangled, only animals that were “alive” as is clearly stated in Genesis 9:3.

POINT:

As recorded at Genesis 9:3, 4, God prohibited man from eating blood from animals he killed for food. Because animals found dead had not been killed by man for food, the Noachian prohibition did not apply, even though such flesh contained its full measure of blood. That indicates that Genesis 9:1-17 was not a case of God instituting some special sacredness regarding blood, but rather God, by decree, was instilling His view of the sacredness of life. Life was the sacred issue addressed to Noah, not blood. Prohibitions regarding blood only served to instill high regard for life, even animal life. If life were not taken, no prohibition of the Noachian Law was applicable. Again, that conclusion is illustrated in God’s provision found at Deuteronomy 14:21.

COUNTERPOINT:

The erroneous position on Deuteronomy 14:21 is which all other arguments are based upon as can be seen from the above “point.” As demonstrated, Genesis 9:3 only allowed the eating of animals that were “alive.” “Abstaining from things strangled” as a reflection of a Noachian law and how it was understood to include animals that died naturally or unnaturally without having the blood drained dictates directly against their main

premise found in Deuteronomy 14:21. The fact that God did not allow the eating of animals found dead dictates directly against the argument that, to quote the above “point”:

“As recorded at Genesis 9:3, 4 God prohibited man from eating blood from animals he killed for food. Because animals found dead had not been killed by man for food, the Noachian prohibition did not apply, even though such flesh contained its full measure of blood. That indicates that Genesis 9:1-17 was not a case of God instituting some special sacredness regarding blood, but rather God, by decree, was instilling His view of the sacredness of life. Life was the sacred issue addressed to Noah, not blood.”

What they use as criteria to prove that God did not place sacredness upon blood is negated by the fact that Noah was NOT permitted to eat animals found dead. An honest and direct reading of Genesis 9:3 definitively establishes that. To entertain any other view is to truly place the burden of proof upon the one promoting it. Also, there can be no mistake that God placed a representative equality upon blood to life. In the confines of Genesis 9:4 it cannot be denied that blood was put on a par with the soul as demonstrated above. God viewed Abel's “blood” as that which cried out (Genesis 4:10), therefore the blood clearly represented Abel's soul. To shed “blood” means to take “life,” another indicator that God views blood as representatively equal to the life.

For instance, let us take the flag that represents the United States. It is merely cloth but it is held in high esteem by those who are loyal to the United States. If one is seen to deliberately disrespect the flag, to burn, or trash it, it is regarded as an affront against the United States, because the flag possesses a type of representative equality to the United States.

Think of one's wedding ring and what it represents. If your mate were to lose your wedding ring by accident not much would be thought of it, but what if they were to purposely disregard it. Perhaps throw it away or pulverize it with a hammer. It would be viewed as a direct affront against your marriage and its value in the eyes of the mate who destroyed or purposely discarded it in some way.

Likewise, with blood. “Life” is indeed sacred, I don't think that anyone would argue against that axiom. God views blood as representatively equal to life. Life belongs to God and so does blood. Disregard for blood would be viewed as disregard for life just like purposeful disregard for one's wedding ring would be regarded as purposeful disregard for the marriage it represents. Life is “sacred.” Therefore blood as that which God views as representatively equal to “life/soul” carries a certain sacredness to it which must be respected, and according to the Apostolic Decree that respect amounts to “abstaining from blood.” We cannot use blood in a fashion that has not been allowed by God either through his word or what we might observe in a divinely constituted arena. To take upon ourselves a use of blood not preceded by those two factors is to disregard God's ownership of that sacred fluid.

POINT:

The conclusion is that the Noachian Law, which was the basis for the Apostolic Decree, applies only to blood obtained by a person's killing a creature. While the Mosaic Law might provide grounds for prohibiting blood transfusions, the Noachian Law does not provide any grounds for coming to that conclusion, because donated blood is not obtained by killing humans or animals.

COUNTERPOINT:

Consider the ramifications of the above. If all that the Noachian Law covered was the “blood” of animals killed for food, what would prevent the pre-Law worshipper from simply going out and draining off a quart of blood from one of his “living” livestock and drinking it because he liked the taste of it? The animal would not have been killed for food and it would not involve eating the “flesh” with the “soul.” Therefore, the pre-Law individual would have every right to use the blood of a living animal in any fashion that he would want to use it.

He could drink it, use it for paint, use it for lubricant, for dye, for blood pudding or any other number of uses. Is that really what these promoters of this interpretation would want to say? Would God allow such cruelty upon the living animal? Why do we not see God speak of this provision anywhere in the scriptures prior to the Law Covenant? Surely, since God told Noah that he could not eat the “blood” equated with the “soul,” Noah would not have had an ordinary use for “donor” (unknowingly donated by the animal) blood as if it was a common, ordinary fluid. He “knew” it represented “life” to God and it would have a certain sacredness attached to it because of that, just as there is certain “sacredness” attached to the wedding ring in the mind of the mate, that ring representing the sacredness of marriage.

The above question has been defended by some in this doctrinal camp as stating that the pre-Law individual would not be allowed to drink the blood of the living animal because Genesis 9:4 states the animal must not have the soul in the flesh to be eaten, but this does not answer the question asked. The question does not deal with the eating of the “flesh” with the “soul/blood” in it, it deals with just the drinking of “donor” blood from a living animal, not the eating of the flesh. They must admit that their view of the Noachian Decree would clearly allow the tapping and drinking of a living animal’s blood without consequence. And, if they find exception with that, how then can the transfusion of living “donor” blood be held in a different light in view of the Apostolic Decree which more than just “don’t eat” blood but further, “*Abstain from blood*”?

It is admitted by these ones that the Mosaic Law would provide grounds for the prohibition of blood transfusions because of the fact that God attaches a sacredness to it. This sacredness actually parallels the very same language that God used to Noah. God stated the grounds for the sacredness of blood by saying in the Law: “For the soul of the flesh is in the blood.” How is this any different then the equation that God makes with the “blood” and “soul” in Genesis 9:4? There is no difference at all!

In regard to all that has been said, it has been amply demonstrated that to teach Noah could eat animals found dead and therefore blood has no special sacredness to it does not conform to what the scriptures indicate about the situation. Will this convince that doctrinal camp of their error? I think I can guarantee that it will not convince them as we know how doctrinal differences generally go. What has been demonstrated however, is that the doctrinal understanding concerning the sacredness of blood, as held by Jehovah’s Witnesses and some others, is solidly founded and that to teach otherwise leaves that teacher with the burden of proof, and a large burden at that.

For a continuation of POINT/COUNTERPOINT discussions, please see the section entitled “[Blood: Point/Counterpoint.](#)”

3) “Abstain from Blood” – A Command or a Concession for Jewish Sensitivities?

Some have presented the notion that the Apostolic Decree to “abstain from blood” and the other abstinences mentioned were not commands for Christians to adhere to indefinitely, but were simply concessions made for the sensitivities of the Jewish populace among them. These ones appeal to 1 Corinthians 8 to prove this claim. We will take a closer look at this to determine the truth of the matter.

The topic in Acts 15 specifically addressed what some JEWISH Christians felt the Gentiles had to do to be saved. That WAS the backdrop of the entire conversation as is clearly spelled out in the first verse and the verses to follow. Follow it through and you will see this clearly demonstrated.

Notice the following that is interspersed throughout this chapter 15:

Verse 1: The supporters of the circumcision claim that Gentile Christians must be circumcised AND observe the Law of Moses in order TO BE SAVED.

Verse 2: The dispute escalates and they decide to take it to the Apostles and older men in Jerusalem.

Verse 5: Again the Jewish faction states it is NECESSARY for Gentiles to be circumcised and follow the Law of Moses. In what sense were they using the word NECESSARY? In keeping with the context as established with verse one they were stating that it was necessary for their SALVATION to get circumcised and follow the Law of Moses.

Verse 11: Peter clarifies the Christian position regarding SALVATION which is through the undeserved kindness (grace) of the Lord Jesus.

Verses 23-29: After a decision is made regarding the issues, a letter is drawn up to inform the Gentiles what would be NECESSARY for them to do that had a bearing on the principles found in the Mosaic Law. Again, in keeping with the context, the word NECESSARY is used in regard to SALVATION as that is the entire backdrop to the dispute as is shown from verses 1, 5 and 11. To deny a connection with salvation is to deny the context.

At this point I would like to address further the claim that this is merely a command given out of regard for Jewish sensitivities. There are a number of things which speak against such a conclusion. First, as I have demonstrated, the backdrop of the discussion was SALVATION. How could it not be in regard to Acts 15:1, 5 and 11 in the equation?

Secondly, consider this: If such a command to abstain from things sacrificed to idols and things strangled and from blood was merely for the sensitivities of the Jews one could ask why the Apostles and older men did not recommend "circumcision" for Gentile Christians which was a MUCH MORE burning and divisive issue of that day? The circumcision issue was the CAUSE for the conference of the body at Jerusalem and ***the moving cause for writing the letter!*** There was strong opposition to the decree about circumcision by those Jews who falsely claimed to be Christian and insisted on staying under the Law. Notice the following passages: Galatians 5:3-6, 11, 12; 6:12-15; Romans 2:25-29; 4:9-12; Philippians 3:2-4. If anything should have been considered in regard to Jewish sensitivities it should have been that one, yet, why would the apostles conciliate them on the point of blood and things sacrificed to idols and raise greater opposition to circumcision, since we know that Paul in the very next chapter was willing to let someone BE CIRCUMCISED out of regard for the JEWISH SENSITIVITIES? (Acts 16:3) Surely, if the list in Acts 15 was merely for their sensitivities, circumcision would have been included since the next chapter shows how they handled circumcision in regard to Jewish sensitivities.

With that considered and with the backdrop of the entire council being a connection with salvation, this should dispel the notion in anyone's mind that it was not binding and lasting MORAL LAW. It WAS binding and lasting moral Law. The sensitivity argument does not fit the context and neither does the claim that the issues did not have to do with salvation.

Furthermore, consider the following information in *Insight on the Scriptures* under "Blood" (published by Jehovah's Witnesses):

Noah and his sons were allowed by Jehovah to add animal flesh to their diet after the Flood, but they were strictly commanded not to eat blood. (Ge 9:1, 3, 4) God here set out a regulation that applied, not merely to Noah and his immediate family, but to all mankind from that time on, because all those living since the Flood are descendants of Noah's family.

Concerning the permanence of this prohibition, Joseph Benson noted: "It ought to be observed, that this prohibition of eating blood, given to Noah and all his posterity, and repeated to the Israelites, in a most

solemn manner, under the Mosaic dispensation, has never been revoked, but, on the contrary, has been confirmed under the New Testament, Acts xv.; and thereby made of perpetual obligation.”—Benson’s *Notes*, 1839, Vol. I, p. 43. ...

[The Apostolic] decree rests, ultimately, on God’s command not to eat blood, as given to Noah and his sons and, therefore, to all mankind. In this regard, the following is found in *The Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended*, by Sir Isaac Newton (Dublin, 1728, p. 184): “This law [of abstaining from blood] was ancients [sic] than the days of *Moses*, being given to *Noah* and his sons, long before the days of *Abraham*: and therefore when the Apostles and Elders in the Council at *Jerusalem* declared that the Gentiles were not obliged to be circumcised and keep the law of *Moses*, they excepted this law of *abstaining from blood, and things strangled*, as being an earlier law of God, imposed not on the sons of *Abraham* only, but on all nations, while they lived together in *Shinar* under the dominion of *Noah*: and of the same kind is the law of *abstaining from meats offered to Idols or false Gods, and from fornication*.”—Italics his.

...The Jerusalem council sent its decision to the Christian congregations to be observed. (Ac 16:4) About seven years after the Jerusalem council issued the decree, Christians continued to comply with the “decision that they should keep themselves from what is sacrificed to idols as well as from blood and what is strangled and from fornication.” (Ac 21:25) And more than a hundred years later, in 177 C.E., in Lyons (now in France), when religious enemies falsely accused Christians of eating children, a woman named Biblis said: “How would such men eat children, when they are not allowed to eat the blood even of irrational animals?”—The Ecclesiastical History, by Eusebius, V, I, 26.

Early Christians abstained from eating any sort of blood. In this regard Tertullian (c. 155-a. 220 C.E.) pointed out in his work *Apology* (IX, 13, 14): “Let your error blush before the Christians, for we do not include even animals’ blood in our natural diet. We abstain on that account from things strangled or that die of themselves, that we may not in any way be polluted by blood, even if it is buried in the meat. Finally, when you are testing Christians, you offer them sausages full of blood; you are thoroughly well aware, of course, that among them it is forbidden; but you want to make them transgress.” Minucius Felix, a Roman lawyer who lived until about 250 C.E., made the same point, writing: “For us it is not permissible either to see or to hear of human slaughter; we have such a shrinking from human blood that at our meals we avoid the blood of animals used for food.”—*Octavius*, XXX, 6.

Surely “fornication” was not being forbidden for the sake of Jewish sensitivities. It was forbidden absolutely, and the word “necessary” in verse 28 would certainly mean necessary in the same sense. The word “necessary” is applied equally to each thing in the list.

Fornication in ANY form would not only cause offense, but would be a death-dealing sin against God. Likewise with the rest of the list. The word “necessary” would not apply to one item in the list differently than it would apply to the rest.

Therefore, one of those things in the list is unquestionably a sin that if committed without repentance could cost us our salvation. What about the others though that are in that list? Do we see indication that those things are “sin” as well, or are they simply issues of sensitivity?

Let’s take a look at the very word that others use to establish that what was really spoken of was just a sensitivity issue and not a sin that could cost us our salvation. That word used is “eidolothuton,” generally translated as “things sacrificed to idols.” Also another very pertinent phrase that we must include in this examination is “aligema eidolon,” generally translated as things “polluted by idols” or “pollution of idols,” found at Acts 15:20.

We will note first that the phrase “pollution” of idols in verse 20 is equated with the phrase “things sacrificed to idols” in verse 29. So, in this context, whatever was meant by the “pollution” of idols was also meant by what was stated in verse 29. It should also be noted that the word “meat” as is found in many translations of verse 29 does not occur there, which is a bit misleading to the overall context. The Greek word there used simply means “things sacrificed to idols.” There is no “meat” specified at all. So what was spoken of in verse 29 was a “pollution” of idols as is stated in verse 20, they being parallel statements.

Therefore, we are not just speaking of “things” sacrificed to idols but the “pollution” that those things would create, which seems a clear reference to the fact this is speaking of “idolatry,” and not just items that might serve as idols to the pagan mind. Do we have any other biblical evidence to help us appreciate that even the phrase “things sacrificed to idols” could be understood in a “forbidden” sense to ALL Christians? Not just for sake of sensitivity issues but because of direct idolatrous connection? Yes we do. In fact, one of those occurrences is in the very chapter that most refer to as the passage that supposedly waters down the Apostolic Decree to a mere sensitivity issue. But first, before coming to 1 Corinthians 8, let's look at another passage which clearly equates the phrase “things sacrificed to idols” with “sin,” not just an issue of sensitivity.

In Revelation 2:14 and 2:20, it states in regard to the Pergamum congregation and the Thyatiran congregation that they were tolerating that woman Jezebel (obviously a symbolism for a Jezebel-like woman) and holding fast to the teaching of Balaam who leads them to “commit fornication” and to “eat things sacrificed to idols.” Both times the “eating of things sacrificed to idols” is listed with the undeniably deadly sin of fornication. Clearly, in these passages, the “eating of things sacrificed to idols” was the sin of “idolatry” that brought God's condemnation to those congregations. This is undeniable when one looks up what happened in the incidents that are referred to in Revelation in connection with the teaching of Balaam. (Numbers 25:1-3, 31:15,16)

With it established that the phrase “things sacrificed to idols” and “eating” things sacrificed to idols can be a clear reference to “idolatrous practices” it would be no wonder then that Acts 15:20 parallel “pollutions” of idols with “things sacrificed to idols,” which both could clearly refer to idolatrous practices, especially the phrase involving the word “pollution.”

Now, what about then the 8th chapter of 1 Corinthians? Is the phrase “things sacrificed to idols” or “eating” things sacrificed to idols ever presented as a clear “sin”? Let's go through each verse and then we can see of course that it is.

“4 Now concerning the eating of foods offered to idols,”

This use of the phrase is obviously referring to the non-idolatrous connection of eating something that had been sacrificed to an idol, as the argument that follows conclusively shows. To a Christian, an idol should mean nothing, and therefore eating something sacrificed to an idol should mean nothing.

“...we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no God but one. 5 For even though there are those who are called “gods,” whether in heaven or on earth, just as there are many “gods” and many “lords,” 6 there is actually to us one God the Father, out of whom all things are, and we for him; and there is one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things are, and we through him. 7 Nevertheless, there is not this knowledge in all persons; but some, being accustomed until now to the idol, eat food as something sacrificed to an idol, and their conscience, being weak, is defiled.”

Here, it is clear that the phrase “eating something sacrificed to an idol” has direct idolatrous connection in the mind of the one eating, as the contrast that is brought out by stating, “there is not this knowledge in all persons.” So far then, twice the phrase “eating things sacrificed to idols” is used and once it refers to the “non-idolatrous

connection” and the other time it refers to the “idolatrous connection” which would surely serve as a “pollution” of idols to a Christian, that which the Apostolic Decree forbids.

“8 But food will not commend us to God; if we do not eat, we do not fall short, and, if we eat, we have no credit to ourselves. 9 But keep watching that this authority of YOURS does not somehow become a stumbling block to those who are weak. 10 For if anyone should see you, the one having knowledge, reclining at a meal in an idol temple, will not the conscience of that one who is weak be built up to the point of eating foods offered to idols?”

Again the phrase “eating foods sacrificed to idols” is used in the sense of an “idolatrous connection” because this is what the “weak consciented” brother would be “emboldened” to do. Surely, there would be nothing wrong with him being emboldened to eat WITHOUT the idolatrous connection, in fact, that would be fine, but here, it is the “idolatrous” POLLUTION that is spoken of again, something that the Apostles clearly condemned as it was listed with fornication which is clearly condemned in ANY context, surely not just in the context of protecting a weak person’s conscience.

“11 Really, by your knowledge, the man that is weak is being ruined, brother for whose sake Christ died.”

Ruined because he has committed an act of idolatry in his mind.

So, it is clear beyond any doubt that the phrase “eating things sacrificed to idols” can be equated, and predominantly so, with the idea of “idolatry.” Therefore, there is no real reason for anyone to insist that what the Apostolic Decree was speaking of was not idolatry. In fact, there are many reasons to insist the opposite because of the inclusion of fornication in the list mentioned in Acts 15. To insist otherwise surely strains the context to the breaking point since the backdrop of the council was “salvational” and what was necessary in that regard. Obviously idolatry and fornication are salvationally necessary abstentions. Likewise therefore, that would be the case with the references to blood and things strangled. Frankly, we can see no other option without destroying the context of what is stated there.

So, what happens is this: they misunderstand the point Paul was making in 1 Corinthians 8. The point is that if you emboldened your brother’s conscience to the point of eating meat sacrificed to idols with that ceremonial attachment in his mind, he not only would have violated his conscience but he would have violated God’s Law against “ceremonially” eating things sacrificed to idols, for it would have then been a form of idolatry, would it not? How could it not be? It is this understanding that keeps perfect harmony between 1 Corinthians 8 and Acts 15. Acts 15 was decided upon in the context of salvational issues, abstaining from things that could cost you your salvation, such as the “fornication” that was mentioned, and of course the “idolatry.” Abstaining from “blood” would have therefore been in the same category.

The point of departure comes in not realizing that what the Apostles forbid in Acts was the “ceremonial” attachment to the idol. What Paul spoke of in 1 Corinthians was not the “ceremonial” eating of meat in regard for the idol, which would be idolatry, but what Paul was talking about being acceptable was the incidental eating of the meat that had been sacrificed to the idol without the ceremonial attachment in the mind of the Christian. It is important to clearly understand this as it is crucial to the harmony and the differences between Acts the 15th chapter and 1 Corinthians the 8th.

1 Corinthians 8 just wasn’t about Paul’s view. It was the view of those “brothers” weak in conscience who might sin by “being emboldened to eat what has been sacrificed to idols.” (Verse 10) If it was okay to do so, then why did Paul present this act as a sin in verses 9-13? One must discern the difference between incidental

eating of something sacrificed to an idol and the ceremonial attachment of such in the conscience of a weak brother.

4) “Abstain from Blood” – Noachian? Jewish? Christian? Or all of the above? The Underlying Principle

As is the case with all laws of God in all time periods, there are principles at work which govern the laws. One would be hard pressed to think of any law at any given time which did not have a principle behind it. Sometimes the principle is ambiguous in the sense that there may be one or more possibilities as to which principle is the governing one, but always, there is a principle, which means there is always a principle behind the law, a REASON for the law. God does not arbitrarily invent laws for the purpose of having a law, but only for the purpose of upholding a principle.

And naturally, when it comes to God's principles, they do not change. God's principles are a constant in his dealings with mankind, no matter what time period we live in.

Jesus Christ proved this to be true when he isolated the two main “principles” that give cause to all God recorded by means of the prophets and the Law:

Matthew 22:37-40: He said to him: “‘You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind.’ 38 This is the greatest and first commandment. 39 The second, like it, is this, ‘You must love your neighbor as yourself.’ 40 On these two commandments the whole Law hangs, and the Prophets.”

We have already seen that life and blood were considered to be sacred to God. They were his property and not to be treated lightly or indiscreetly. This is readily apparent by what was stated to both Noah and Moses concerning blood being the “soul” which is the “life” of the living animal or human.

Since all laws have an underlying principle to them, a principle that does not change, the question needs to be asked: What was the underlying principle in regard to not eating the blood of the animal along with the flesh? In each “dispensation,” pre-Law, Law and Christianity, we have a command which boils down to “abstaining from blood.” Understanding the underlying principle helps us a great deal in understanding exactly what is meant by the phrase “ABSTAIN from blood.” This will also help us to see the error of the following claim referred to in [“Pre-Law Society and the Apostolic Decree”](#):

The laws on blood found in the scriptures, whether Noachian, Mosaic or Apostolic only forbid the “eating” of blood for food, but did not specifically forbid the taking of the blood into the body as BLOOD, rather than food. Since the scriptures do not differentiate that aspect, this view holds that it should be up to the individual Christian whether or not they could accept blood as “blood,” either in its whole state or in regard to its major components, being red cells, white cells, platelets and plasma.

In response to this, let's consider the following:

It was certainly not because God viewed blood to be evil that he forbid it to be eaten and commanded it to be abstained from. But rather, as in the case of both Noah and Moses, he put it on an even scale, the blood with LIFE, with the SOUL of the being. He specifically tells Noah that the blood is the soul. He even refers to man's LIFE in verse 5 as man's BLOOD:

Genesis 9:3-7: Every moving animal **that is alive** may serve as food for YOU. As in the case of green vegetation, I do give it all to YOU. 4 Only flesh with **its soul—its blood**—YOU must not eat. 5 And,

besides that, YOUR **blood** of YOUR **souls** shall I ask back. From the hand of every living creature shall I ask it back; and from the hand of man, from the hand of each one who is his brother, **shall I ask back the soul of man.** 6 Anyone shedding **man's blood**, by man will **his own blood be shed**, for in God's image he made man. 7 And as for YOU men, be fruitful and become many, make the earth swarm with YOU and become many in it."

So rather than evil, he regarded it on a par with life, a most SACRED possession. No one can successfully deny that blood was equated with the soul in the Noachian Decree and in the Mosaic Law:

Leviticus 17:10-14: "As for any man of the house of Israel or some alien resident who is residing as an alien in YOUR midst who eats any sort of blood, I shall certainly set my face against the soul that is eating the blood, and I shall indeed cut him off from among his people. 11 **For the soul of the flesh is in the blood**, and I myself have put it upon the altar for YOU to make atonement for YOUR souls, ***because it is the blood that makes atonement by the soul.*** 12 That is why I have said to the sons of Israel: "**No soul of YOU must eat blood** and no alien resident who is residing as an alien in YOUR midst should eat blood." 13 "As for any man of the sons of Israel or some alien resident who is residing as an alien in YOUR midst who in hunting catches a wild beast or a fowl that may be eaten, he must in that case pour its blood out and cover it with dust. 14 **For the soul of every sort of flesh is its blood by the soul in it.** Consequently I said to the sons of Israel: "**YOU must not eat the blood of any sort of flesh, because the soul of every sort of flesh is its blood.** Anyone eating it will be cut off."

Life is sacred, no one will deny, and God viewed blood as the LIFE and likewise sacred. Its sacred value is proven by the fact that it paid the price of LIFE in the atonement of sin. God accepted the "blood" instead of the "life" that was actually owed by the human who had sinned. It was a most sacred fluid and solely within the jurisdiction of God as to its use. This sacredness is what established the precedent for the atoning value of Christ's own blood for the sake of all mankind. This is testified to by many, many scholars. For further information concerning those scholars, see the previous article entitled "[Pre-Law Society and the Apostolic Decree.](#)"

So as to whether the Apostolic Decree was based upon Noah's society or the Jewish Law society, in regard to the underlying principle, we would have to say both. Not one or the other but both. Therefore, when the apostles referred to these abstentions, the underlying principles behind these abstentions were the same underlying principles as were present with both Noah and Moses. Blood is sacred, it is God's possession and not to be used in any way not divinely demonstrated.

The only biblical usage for blood ever presented was in regard to atonement and whatever handling of the blood was necessary to facilitate that atonement. As is discussed in the previous article entitled "[Law, Mercy, and the Question of Property.](#)" the only other possible use is for the extraction of fractions which are not considered blood, to be shared with humans for the purpose of sustaining life, and even that is uncertain and left to the conscience decision of the individual Christian. For more information concerning that, please see the referenced article above.

Therefore, whether Noachian or Mosaic in origination, the true underlying origin of the laws concerning blood are based upon the principle that blood is the sacred symbol of life/soul and belongs only to God. Therefore, as humans, as is the case with all sacred things, we must not presume upon the property of God, his sacred possessions, and take that property for our own use without permission or without some indication of allowance from a divine source. We have seen as in the case of Saul's men who were starving and near death, even then, it was a sin to not take regard for God's law to pour it onto the ground, rather than allow it to be used to save their life.

Therefore, blood transfusions, using blood as blood and/or using blood as food, regardless of that distinction, would be a violation of God's property and the sanctity of blood because God has never sanctioned the use of blood in that manner. Only for atonement, and POSSIBLY, only for the extraction of fractions to sustain the life of the human as happens within the divine arena of the womb between the mother and the child.

If there is no precedent otherwise for the use of blood, then there is no allowance in the life of a Christian to use blood otherwise.

5) Blood: Point/Counterpoint

The following is presented in a point/counterpoint fashion as seen at the end of the section entitled "[Pre-Law Society and the Apostolic Decree](#)." This will be expanded to address issues as they arise.

POINT:

Is the symbol of life more important than life? If blood is sacred because it is the symbol of life, life itself should be more important than the symbol. For instance, the showbread was a symbol for something greater, yet Jesus said it was acceptable for David to eat to sustain his life.—Matthew 12:3-7; Luke 6:1-4.

COUNTERPOINT:

The real question is: Were there any provisions to violate the sacredness of blood if it meant you could die if you did not? No, and the case involving Saul's men is a perfect example: since Saul pronounced a curse upon anyone partaking of food before vengeance was executed on the enemy (1 Samuel 14:24), the Israelites became famished and did not take time to drain the blood from animals they butchered afterwards. (1 Samuel 14:32-34) Verse 33 states: "Look! The people are sinning against Jehovah by eating along with the blood." They still sinned even though they were famished, close to collapsing, and therefore vulnerable to a potential counterattack. (1 Samuel 14:28) Did that mean that God regarded the symbol greater than the reality? Yes, so should we not follow suit?

Blood was either to be poured out or to be used as a part of a sacrifice to God, not used by man for any personal gain. (Leviticus 17:11-14) To use it for another purpose than as God directs, degrades its value and worth. To use it for another person actually raises them to the level of God, as the blood belongs to Him.

Since the sacredness of blood is actually what establishes our means of redemption from sin and "temporary" life, it could be argued that the sacredness of blood is worth far more than the temporary life that any of us now enjoy.

Consider also the account of Uzzah, who was struck down by God for presumptuously seizing the Ark of the Covenant, a symbol of His presence. (2 Samuel 6:6-7) Jehovah's remaining jealous for the symbol of His presence (the Ark of the Covenant) was more important to Him than His sparing Uzzah's life for his rash presumption against the Ark's sanctity.

Thus, it simply needs to be asked, "Is obedience to Jehovah more important than life?" This question helps to draw out the person's true motivations in this matter, as in trying to find a loophole to get around Jehovah's law without abandoning it. One could use the same bad reasoning to say that if the government ever threatens you with execution if you don't renounce your faith, you should renounce it temporarily so that you can live longer in Jehovah's service. Such compromises do not vindicate Jehovah's sovereignty. Jesus also said to his disciples: "If anyone wants to come after me, let him disown himself and pick up his torture stake and continually follow me. For whoever wants to save his soul will lose it; but whoever loses his soul for my sake will find it."—Matthew 16:24, 25.

6) Abstaining from Blood

By Al Kidd

Blood's major components (red blood cells, white blood cells, platelets, and plasma) targeted for collection must not be stored for reuse in the very component form in which they were taken. If the major components are destroyed (i.e., for example, if subcomponents are extracted, by some manmade procedure, from any of the major components), then many of us Jehovah's Witnesses reason that the subcomponents may be stored for some use.

Now, it is instructive for us to consider lymph, and the destiny of most of the lymphatic plasma, which is naturally taken from blood. Most of that plasma and white blood cells which get to be squeezed out of blood capillaries naturally—not “squeezed out” of lymph vessels—are destined to be returned naturally to blood veins. Therefore we must consider these components to be still a part of the organism's blood, that is to say, they still retain their major component identity as blood. Accordingly, those components we cannot Scripturally harvest and store for reuse in the very major component form in which they might be taken. Medical technicians can design and implement a system that also brings about an extra-blood-vessel circulation of some blood (e.g., blood that flows into a surgically opened wound; also, blood that flows through a dialysis machine) so that it may be made to continue on in a path of movement that results in an eventual reintroduction of the blood into blood veins. (We may say that the technicians have mimicked some soul's extra-blood-vessel circulation of blood so that the blood involved in that artificial circulation-path was never effectually removed from its being part of that soul's bloodstream.) This blood as blood is not stored for significantly later reintroduction into some bloodstream, and accordingly does not fall under God's command that any blood, which has been taken from some soul, not be reused. (The Mosaic Law commanded that a collection of blood from a sacrificial victim be taken, and that some of it be put on the horns of the altar and the rest be poured out at the base of the altar, these procedures being for atonement of sins.) In antiquity, the most readily available procedure for making certain that blood as blood not become targeted for forbidden use was procedure accomplished when the blood of an animal killed for food was poured out onto the ground.

An interesting observation arises here. It was noted above that “most” of the lymph gets to be reintroduced into blood veins. Even so that reintroduction, yet never did that lymph as lymph—which has become reintroduced into blood vessels—, become either effectually or naturally barred from returning to blood vessels. The implication, however, is that some lymph does get to be naturally (non-pathologically) removed from vessel-borne circulation; accordingly, it will not be (naturally) reintroduced into some soul's blood veins. If there is some major component of blood that has come to be *naturally and permanently* either extra-blood-vessel or extra-lymph-vessel blood—this so that it is naturally and permanently out of circulation though yet somewhere else in the soul—, then may those entities become either part of a homologous harvest or else part of an autologous harvest of entities suitable for their reintroduction into some soul's bloodstream? Consider the fact that some leukocytes are introduced apparently naturally, i.e., non-pathologically, to a mother's breast milk, and a breast-suckling infant will ingest them. If we can say that God did not care to invent a mechanism for prevention of some major component of blood (namely, a very few of a certain kind of leukocytes) from their becoming permanently removed from circulation so that they are also naturally present in some woman's breast milk, then what might we say about that, or about some other major components of blood (besides the leukocytes that appear in a mother's breast milk) that naturally and permanently exit the bloodstream? May we logically make the statement that God does not care if men invent some procedure for harvesting such major components of blood that are neither lymph-vessel borne nor blood-vessel borne, but are major components that have naturally and permanently exited the vessels in which they were borne along? Some may conscientiously argue against affirming such a statement on the following basis: ‘God is not concerned with that blood which remains in a slaughtered and (properly) bled animal, this because such blood will be incidentally ingested. It is incidentally ingested because, following reasonable effort to drain the slaughtered animal of its blood, it is incidentally present in the slaughtered animal. (This draining of the blood onto the ground was a practical way

for an ancient Israelite to deny anyone use of the blood as blood.) Blood in any of its major components, however, is hardly incidentally present for some further use as blood if it is being specially harvested with the thought that one should not specially disassemble major components of blood into their subcomponents.' On the other hand, though, neither can we say that certain ones of the leukocytes present in a mother's milk are incidentally present there, for apparently God purposed that a few leukocytes of a certain kind come to be found in a mother's breast milk for the benefit of the nursling. So, even though there are other leukocytes (besides those leukocytes that appear in a mother's breast milk) that naturally and permanently exit the blood stream, we are faced with the following question: if medical science should ever find a practical way for technicians to harvest any of them (while such components are neither lymph-vessel borne nor blood-vessel borne, but are components that have naturally and permanently exited circulation) in quantities sufficient for some medical therapy, then must that therapy be one that all of us Jehovah's Witnesses should reject? It does not appear to this author at this time that the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses need affirm that such a therapy would be in violation of God's law as respects blood.

N.B. We should take note of the following facts: "Circulating leukocytes do not stay in the blood for very long. Granulocytes circulate for 4 to 8 hours and then migrate into the tissues, where they live another 4 or 5 days. Monocytes travel in the blood for 10 to 20 hours, then migrate into the tissues and transform into a variety of macrophages. . . . Macrophages can live as long as a few years." (See Kenneth S. Saladin, *Anatomy and Physiology* 2d ed (McGraw-Hill, 2001) 689. Now, whereas leukocytes that have naturally and permanently exited the bloodstream might be acceptably harvested for infusion therapy if ever such a technology becomes existent, it does not appear that the same thing may be said on moral grounds as respects lymphocytes. "Lymphocytes, responsible for long-term immunity, survive from a few weeks to decades; they leave the bloodstream for the tissues and eventually enter the lymphatic system, which empties them back into the bloodstream. Thus, they are continually recycled from blood to tissue fluid to lymph and finally back to the blood." (ibid., 689) So, even though lymphocytes may naturally become present in extra-circulatory places in the organism, yet they are not destined to remain permanently (for their lifetime) in those places and out of vessel-borne circulation; accordingly, must we not reason that they do not lose their blood-ness? So it seems to this author.

IDENTIFYING THAT WHICH HAS "BLOOD-NESS," AND THAT WHICH DOES NOT

The individuating entities that identify our blood in contradistinction to other biotic entities are: non-nucleated erythrocytes [red blood cells], leukocytes [white blood cells], thrombocytes [platelets, thought to be fragments of giant bone marrow cells, the megakaryocytes], and plasma. So, if the Bible prohibits certain human actions involving the use of blood as blood, then the individuating entities (the four major components) in circulation are logically (not indistinguishably) included: they cannot be excluded. Why not? Gray's Anatomy, page 727 under "Blood," states:

"Blood consists of a fluid medium called the plasma in which are suspended minute structures called the formed elements of the blood. The formed elements include (1) the red blood corpuscles (RBC), (2) the white blood cells (WBC), and (3) the platelets."

Each one of the four major components of blood has "blood-ness," that is to say, each one has identification as one of the individuating elements that identify blood as blood in contradistinction to other biotic elements.

There are entities found in the circulatory system that are found outside of it as well, and thus do not have an identity and function that occur only when present within an animal's circulatory system. Such entities include: water, carbohydrates, hormones, hemoglobins, some globulins, albumins, fibrinogen, nucleated erythrocytes, and some few leukocytes. (The leukocytes here are those that have non-pathologically exited a mother's blood stream so that they are those leukocytes present in her breast milk and are of a nature that will benefit her

nursling. We say “non-pathologically” because their occurrence in a mother’s milk is apparently in accordance with a God-ordained biology whereby some few will naturally and permanently exit the mother’s circulatory system.) Do the Biblical proscriptions regarding blood extend to these? Do they per se and necessarily fit the definition of “blood-ness” any longer? It does not seem so to this author at this time. What, though, of plasma?

Whole plasma itself is one of the major components of blood. Its essential subcomponents have their origins in places outside the bloodstream, but when once they are all together in the blood vessels, then they comprise whole plasma, and (vertebrate serum) plasma as such is proper only to a bloodstream. Plasma performs—and contributes to the performance of—a host of blood-based, vital functions in living souls.

We should also note that God allows ingestion of certain formed elements that were destined for circulation in a bloodstream but had never actually become part of a bloodstream by the time they were ingested. These are the nucleated erythrocytes, also certain reticulocytes (erythrocytes having become enucleated just prior to their exiting bone marrow for entry into the bloodstream), and leukocytes present in lymphoid tissues we call bone marrow. And Israelites could eat a bone’s marrow. This is important because we know that hemoglobin was consumed when marrow was consumed, and hemoglobin has a nutrient in it (namely, iron). God was not opposed to the eating of that hemoglobin because, at the time of its consumption, it was not hemoglobin that was composing a major component of blood (namely, enucleated erythrocytes that had become part of a circulatory system). If one was consuming hemoglobin at a time when it had not become isolated from other subcomponents but was yet present within enucleated RBCs (a major component of non-avian, vertebrate blood), then he ought not to have consumed it at that time. But if one were even targeting for some kind of consumption (whether by mouth or by intravenous infusion) bone marrow-residing erythrocytes—namely, those erythrocytes that had never yet entered a bloodstream—, then it does not seem to me that Jehovah’s Witnesses must find that use (consumption) to be objectionable, and that because none of those erythrocytes would have entered the bloodstream. Accordingly, then, those erythrocytes lack “blood-ness”: they cannot be drained out onto the ground as can be done with blood in any of its four major components while present in an organism’s blood vessels.

Interestingly, medical science has found a way to make use of hemoglobin by first compromising the integrity—that is to say, by first ruining the well-formed structure—of the red blood cells that contain it. That hemoglobin, too, will not be objectionable to all of Jehovah’s Witnesses. Why not? Because even though it forms the basis for a form of infusion therapy that incorporates (modified) hemoglobin, that hemoglobin—whether whole or in part—*is not being indiscriminately consumed* along with all other subcomponents comprising RBCs. The subcomponent hemoglobin had been given its own space apart from the other subcomponents of RBCs: the RBCs, then, were not specifically targeted for use as RBCs.

Similarly, there are subcomponents of plasma that—as is also true of nucleated erythrocytes and per force true also of their hemoglobin molecules—have their origin apart from any chemistry taking place within circulating blood (plasma). Plasma’s proteins (the alpha and beta globulins, albumin, and fibrinogen) originate in the liver, and when an animal’s liver is eaten, then those proteins are eaten. However, at the time of their being eaten, they had yet to become the *sine qua non* for that constitution and manner of function that define plasma. If there were a plasma that could be found in the body either (1) before such might begin to circulate in an organism’s circulatory vessels (whereby real plasma also has the function of a fluid vehicle, and, as such, is destined normatively to remain in circulation so that it eventually returns to the heart via blood veins), or (2) after it had naturally and permanently exited the soul’s circulatory system so that it might be found in extra-circulatory places in the body, then were it such a plasma that, respectively, (a) had yet to acquire blood-ness, or (b) had lost its blood-ness. And then might we view such a component the same as we view those erythrocytes that constitutively inform bone marrow—this regardless of whether these be nucleated or enucleated erythrocytes, for they may be eaten while present in marrow—, and the same as we view those leukocytes in a mother’s breast milk. But if a unit of plasma becomes ruined through dissolution into its subcomponents *for purpose of*

removal of the subcomponents from that unit of plasma, then the *removed* subcomponents no longer define anything that must be called blood. They may be used by men, just as we can use hemoglobin both before it is found in a RBC that was released into circulation, and after its role as such, that is to say, after it is no longer present along with all the other subcomponents that had comprised RBCs that were in circulation, even be they those RBCs specially harvested for the express purpose that they undergo dissolution for the *removal/isolation* of the subcomponent hemoglobin.

Moreover, even if molecular biologists should ever manufacture in a laboratory entities indistinguishable from the well-formed elements and plasma that have their existence and function primarily while they are present in an organism's circulatory system, then there does not appear to this author any basis for their rejection as part of some medical therapy. My thought here is as follows: because in the (unlikely, if not impossible) event of men's specially bringing into existence certain entities (namely, entities structurally and functionally indistinguishable from natural blood's major components), then, so long as those artificial entities have yet to form a part of any bloodstream, they are not blood; they do not have "blood-ness." Such manmade entities we need not consider to be blood until such time as they are infused and become indistinguishable from their natural (non-manmade), major component counterpart.

ON BLOOD FRACTIONS

Now, because all matter—and, naturally, that includes blood, too—consists of neutrons, electrons and protons, then is one violating the Bible's proscription of eating blood just because he is eating a certain biscuit that happens to have in it some neutrons, protons, and electrons that formerly were in the composition of some blood? No, because there is not in that biscuit the particular arrangement of those neutrons, electrons and protons that formerly existed for them when they produced the major components of blood. Water molecules lack a structure that gives them a function that exists primarily while they are present in some organism's circulatory system. In isolation, then, they cannot be called blood, that is to say, they have no intrinsic blood-ness about them. That, of course, is clear on its face. The fatty globules in blood lack a structure that gives them a function that exists primarily while they are present in some organism's circulatory system. In isolation, then, they, too, cannot be called blood, that is to say, they have no intrinsic blood-ness about them. And so on. This is not, however, true as respects red blood cells, white blood cells, platelets and plasma. Thus, if the components named above—the blood cells, platelets, and the plasma—are unnaturally removed from a creature (i.e., are not removed according to God-ordained biology for a creature's bloodstream), and they are then taken to one's self (for him to make some use of any or all of the major components *in a manner that makes no distinction as to the subcomponents of any or all of the major components*), then the one taking to himself those components has sinned against Jehovah. Even if the blood (serum) be coagulated at the time that a man takes it to himself, which is the case for blood that was not drained in a timely manner from an animal at the time of its being killed—, then the man doing any of those things has defiled his conscience, and is liable to Jehovah's judgment. He did not keep himself from (illicit use of) blood (Acts 15:28, 29).

It is not correct to say 'If there is some logic'—because there is, as we have just seen—'by which we can say that each of the major components of blood have blood-ness (identity as blood), then we are bound by that logic to recognize the identity of blood in the minor fractions, too, which comprise the plasma and the well-formed elements of blood.' The issue of this identity under consideration is not joined over the question 'Is some entity—irrespective its structure and functions that it may have—nevertheless somewhere present in a unit of whole blood? And merely by such presence in blood, does it thereby qualify for the label "blood" as much as any other beneficial entity present in blood?' No, but the issue rather revolves around the following question: Does a certain entity in blood have a structure or composition such that it is suitable only for an entity that is meant to have its existence and function primarily while it is present in an organism's blood vessels? For any entity in blood that gets the "Yes" answer to the question just raised, we say that it is a major component in blood and itself has "blood-ness"; it has the identification of blood. Water and the hemoglobin do not of

themselves have blood-ness. Neither of their structures is such that the structure or composition is suitable only as an entity that is meant to have an existence and function only while it is present in an organism's blood vessels. RBCs, white blood cells, platelets, and plasma have blood-ness because they respectively perform a function that could not be theirs unless they had come to be in a bloodstream.

A certain steering wheel may have been made so that it easily fulfills a necessary function, namely, steering for a functional automobile (car). Does that mean that all steering wheels that have ever been in existence existed only for the existence of well-functioning cars? No. Consider that even when we have identified a certain steering wheel as that which has come from a car and was necessary to that car's being in existence (at one time) as a well-functioning car, still we have not identified a component having a structure that is only for the existence of well-functioning cars. Consider the following as empirical proof: the 5-AT Trimotor airplane (a model of transport planes built decades ago by the Ford Motor Company) had a control column with an aileron-controlling, wooden-spoke steering wheel attached to its top. That steering wheel was of the same design that Henry Ford had been using for the steering wheels in his Model T Ford cars.

Functionally, a part or fraction of a major component of blood (e.g., an erythrocyte's hemoglobin, and the plasma protein albumin) is no more blood than is a piece of iron a car merely because it came from a car. A certain metal structure need not of itself possess identification as a car. (True, at some point, as we add, per design, more to that metal structure (chassis), we can see that it has become integrally involved in an automobile's having come into existence: it has become integrally involved in a certain entity's coming into existence, an entity which has ability to function, throughout its construction, for an identification we know to be true of certain kinds of automobiles.)

Indeed, every compound structure in the Universe is subject to losing enough of its parts so that, in the event, it has lost its identity as the distinguishable entity it was prior to its decomposition. Therefore, let us consider now a parallel as respects blood. A glutamic acid from a blood cell is not blood. The blood cell is. It is not glutamic acid per se that is necessarily forbidden a man's use. Even so, though, we must infer from the Scriptures that blood, in any of its four major (typable and identity-giving) components present in an organism's circulatory system, is forbidden to a man. He may not use any of blood's major components in their major component form when once he might cause removal of them from a soul's circulatory system.

ON NOT TAKING TO YOURSELF ILLICIT BLOOD

We must stay away from use of blood as blood. A failure to stay away from illicit blood may occur when a man makes some use of blood as blood, *this because he did not destroy it in a way that results in the removal/isolation of (some) subcomponent(s)*—but, as is true for some cases of blood abuse, stored it—when he removed blood from some soul's circulatory system in order that he might make some use of the blood as blood.

One's eating an animal soul that was not properly bled means that he has taken to himself blood that belongs to God. (See below for Scriptural support of this position in the quotation of Genesis 9:4, 5 NW.)

One's violation of God's law by his swallowing blood for sustenance is not the only way that he can pollute himself with another soul's blood. A murderer appears to God as one who has placed upon himself the blood of his victim(s). For example, we read at Judges 9:23, 24 the following: "God . . . put their blood upon Abimelech their brother because he killed them." God will have back that blood, for it belongs to him: "Only flesh with its soul—its blood—you must not eat. And besides that [*matter of one's taking to himself an animal's blood by his eating it—so that he must accordingly answer to me (God) for it—*], your blood of your souls shall I ask back [,too]. From the hand of every living creature shall I ask it back; and from the hand of each one who is his brother, shall I ask back the soul [(the blood)] of [a] man" (Genesis 9:4, 5 NW).

What is the principle underlying God's juxtaposing (1) a prohibition against eating blood, on the one hand, and (2) His asking back human blood, on the other hand? The principle is *sanctity of blood*. **Blood is a sacred fluid** that stands in God's eyes not as merely a part (organ) of the creature (soul) like any other of its parts, but rather stands in God's eyes as a part especially appropriate for legally representing that soul's—that life's—ownership by God. The use of blood in connection with the Day of Atonement offerings illustrates this principle very well. The life value of the one (the sacrificial victim) was legally transferred to another as represented by the (clean) animal victim's blood.

Yet another way by which some man—a God-appointed preacher—can pollute himself with the blood of another is by his failure to do the loving thing for his wicked neighbor through warning him that he should repent his wickedness. God will have back from the derelict preacher the blood of that wicked man whom God had to kill for his being unrepentant of his wicked ways, for God declares: ". . . his blood I shall ask back from your own hand" (Ezekiel 3:18). Yes, God will have back blood taken from a soul. *It belongs to him*.

Blood transfusion is yet another means whereby many men have violated God's rights as respects blood (namely, His right to say that a human ought not to take to himself some other creature's blood). Is a violation of God's rights as respects blood a weighty matter in His sight? Acts 15:28, 29 answers Yes!

Christians must decline blood transfusion because it is but another way whereby one takes to himself another creature's blood. Blood transfusion is actually a way for taking into one's circulatory system some blood that ought not to have been kept back from God. (Compare Leviticus 17:13.) **Appreciating God's mind on the matter, Christians do not store up blood for it to be used again as blood**; consequently, they do not subject themselves to therapies that involve transfused introduction of more blood for it to become part of the blood stream. We cannot agree with any ideas that mean another way of taking to ourselves forbidden blood. It is of no moment to us Christians that physicians say, "Blood transfusion has proved itself a therapy necessary for preventing death in many of our patients." We hold that we ought never to put aside any of God's laws for us on the basis of argument that obedience to them may result in physical harm to us. (Compare Daniel 3:17, 18; 6:4-10; Hebrews 11:35; Revelation 12:11.) Also, the Scriptural account of the men who went to eating the unbled flesh of cattle they had just slaughtered—this eating took place after Saul had misguidedly decreed that his soldiers should not break off pursuit and destruction of the enemy, in order to eat, until first evening had fallen—is of interest here. Their critical need for food—their critical need for energy to chase down all the enemy for a decisive slaughter of them (1 Samuel 14:22, 23, 30, 31)—put the Israelite army in a critical situation (1 Samuel 14:24, 28), one in which some—perhaps very many—soldiers may have felt that they were justified in their decision not to wait until the animals, which they had gone to slaughtering, could be sufficiently bled *in a place properly prepared for the bleedings of a large number of animals being slaughtered* (1 Samuel 14:32, 33). The battlefield emergency did not excuse those soldiers for their too hurriedly making preparations for eating the slaughtered animals, for many soldiers, in their haste, did not sufficiently bleed the animals. A stop was put to this sinning against Jehovah because all the soldiers wanting yet to slaughter some animals for food obeyed the remedial directive (1 Samuel 14:34). In this way the Israelite army showed repentance. All the soldiers concluded, on the basis of what they were able to know at the time, the following thing: the army was in need of eating food so that, after the eating, it might then—after a little while—have sufficient strength to resume King Saul's plan for battle against the enemy, this for a decisive end to the enemy's threat (1 Samuel 14:36). They were taught that even an emergency could offer no excuse for one's not being careful enough to avoid taking to himself another soul's blood.

Always the blood of any soul ought to be handled by us servants of God in such a manner that we do not become guilty of having taken to ourselves a soul's blood, whether human or animal. We must not desire taking (some of) any soul's blood for the purpose of putting, in some fashion, blood as blood into use. This means, for example, that we do not target for some use a major component of blood (a component *not* disassembled into its

subcomponents). Here disassembly means that some subcomponent comes to have an assigned space apart from the other subcomponents.

Some who are opposed to the stand of us Jehovah's Witnesses make the bald assertion that it was only the blood of slaughtered animals that concerned God. The logic of Leviticus 17:10ff refutes their position. True, the context in which there occurred the pouring out of blood of an animal slaughtered for food was naturally assumed to be the context in which most Israelites would find themselves when faced with the decision as to what they would do with a soul's blood. (It is a matter of remark among even those who are not Jehovah's Witnesses concerning a certain custom among an African people. African Masai tribesmen have accustomed themselves to their drinking blood from the non-lethal puncture wound they give a live cow.) Still, God requires that His servants not take to themselves "the blood of any sort of flesh." The logic in the wording of that requirement covers unusual and extreme cases in which one might be tempted to remove only the blood of some living soul. In Leviticus 17:10, 14 (Young's Literal Translation of the Bible) we read that God is against the consumption of "*any blood*" (v. 10) that comes from "*any flesh*," (v. 14) and not just the blood of animals whose flesh was considered to be dietarily "clean" flesh. So, in ancient Israel, might an Israelite, who might have found himself especially in need of fluid intake, have reasoned that he might puncture his dietarily unclean camel in order to take only some of its blood—not its flesh—for his emergency circumstance? The logic in the wording for the pertinent verses in Leviticus 17th chapter would certainly cover unusual and extreme circumstances in which some Israelites might have found themselves. They would have had no basis for reasoning that they might set aside God's rights as respects "the blood of *any sort of flesh*" (Leviticus 17:14 NW).

WHY PLASMA HAS DIFFERENT MORAL SIGNIFICANCE THAN DOES BONE MARROW

We Jehovah's Witnesses refuse plasma-infusion therapy because we recognize that plasma has blood-ness—it has identification as a major and necessary component of blood—; however, we need not refuse bone marrow transplantation. Why do we distinguish between plasma and bone marrow when it comes to their uses in medical therapies?

True, plasma is not a well-formed element as is true for a blood component that has a plasma membrane, definite shape, and visible structure; still, plasma is listed as one of blood's four major components. (And in this essay, the author refers to plasma, too, as an entity, although it is not a well-formed entity as is true of cells.) Plasma is what remains when whole blood has its well-formed elements removed, and the fluid (plasma) that remains presents itself as a straw-colored fluid. As for plasma's proteins, we should be interested here in those proteins that normatively and necessarily inform plasma from the time that an organism became a living soul with its own blood supply. Interestingly, not until a baby is between two to eight months old does it begin to have in its plasma those antibodies that we identify as agglutinins because of the reaction they can produce after having come in contact with certain antigens—the antigens here under consideration being just those agglutinogens present on surfaces of RBCs that are not proper to a subject's own blood stream.

Now, some of our detractors (wrongfully) argue that the plasma protein albumin would qualify for identification as blood based upon our definition of what blood is. Is albumin a molecule unique to blood chemistry? Albumin has been defined as any protein that is soluble in water and moderately concentrated salt solutions, being also coagulable by heat. It is found not only as the major constituent in blood plasma, but is also found in plants (e.g., in plant lutein), seeds (e.g., sunflower seeds), milk, and is 70% of egg white. True, there are differences in the albumin molecule according to the different species of life having them, but they all share the same chemical formula ("The albumins contain in all cases the elements carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, sulphur and oxygen; their composition, however, varies within certain limits: C = 50-55 %, H=6-9-7-3%,N=iS-i9%,S=o-3-2-4%,O = i9-24%, ±£ crystallized albumin is C = 5i-48 %, H=6-76 %, N= actors. 18-14%, 8=0-96%, O=22-66%, which points to the formula C72oHn34N2i8S5O248, corresponding to the molecular weight 16,954"), and

apparently maintain a basic similarity in structure regardless of the species' albumin molecules under consideration. Of course, I am not arguing that (vertebrate serum) albumin is without unique functions: it carries many biological molecules (e.g., fatty acids, bilirubin) as well as pharmaceutical molecules, and plays the major role in blood pH maintenance. It is also responsible for 80% of a human's osmotic blood pressure, which is pressure created in the blood vessels through the plasma proteins' ability to attract water into the vessels. But even though God has made species-specific amino acid sequences for the albumin molecule, along with his having caused some other differences in the molecule, he still has made basically the same molecular structure to function for the existence of a great variety of species, including some plant species. So, the following statement is not true: "Albumin is unique to blood chemistry and only thereby is it indispensable for the existence of only those species of animal life having blood vessels." On the other hand, though, (vertebrate serum) plasma is unique to blood chemistry, and we can say it has 'blood-ness.' Insect haemolymph lacks many of the components crucial to the formation of vertebrate plasma; however, of interest here is the fact that insect haemolymphic plasma does contain fibrinogen, which is one of the three major types of proteins found in vertebrates' serum plasma, the other two being the albumins and globulins (alpha and beta).

Now let us consider bone marrow. Bone marrow as a lymphoid organ may be considered apart from any circulatory vessels present in it, and that is also to say that if an animal is properly bled, it is then immaterial to the one harvesting bone marrow for food as respects what percentage of the total mass taken (when bone-marrow food is being harvested) is comprised of blood's major components that may yet be *incidentally* present in circulatory vessels within the bone marrow of a slaughtered and properly bled animal. The harvester of that marrow *is not especially targeting* any components that had been in the animal's circulatory system when harvesting the bone marrow (the soft, sponge-like tissue at the center of most large bones) for food, but the same cannot be said for the end-product differentiations of stem cells present in the bone marrow before they are released into the bloodstream as white blood cells, red blood cells, and platelets. There is no such thing as draining them from bone marrow, nor is it desired so by those who want to eat bone marrow. Our detractors should exercise care that in their taking us to task about bone marrow, they do not ignore all the above so that their remonstrance is a *non sequitur*, given the logical point of departure we can make as respects bone marrow.

Let us consider a hypothetical scenario, namely, one's harvesting a collection of bone marrow to fill a 20-gallon tank. Its red, fluid-dripping appearance—this especially so if the harvested marrow is measured in gallons—has not necessarily anything to do either with what it is or how one must dispose of it. And because Israelites could eat bone marrow, then we must suppose that permission to eat it, as given in the Scriptures, hinged neither on the amount of it having been collected into one place (container), nor its consequent appearance. So, if the end-product differentiations of stem cells constitutive of bone marrow (prior to their release into the bloodstream) could be cloned or harvested in quantities sufficient for an infusion therapy, then it appears that one need not have objection to that infusion therapy.

ON NOT TAKING BLOOD TO OURSELVES

Some who take issue with us Jehovah's Witnesses as respects our stand on blood say that it is only blood of a dead animal that is of concern to God, this so that if, for example, one slaughters an animal for its meat, then its blood must be poured out. If disposal of blood was required only when an animal was slaughtered (for food), then were Israelites permitted to take blood from a living cow and drink it? (Masai tribesmen in Africa sometimes drink blood they take from a live cow. The reader will see below more in connection with this remarkable practice among the Masai people.)

Leviticus 17:10-12 gives us to understand that God's thinking is that blood never be targeted for consumption. Indeed, then, Leviticus 17:10-12 logically covers (outlaws) those cases when, for example, one is taking blood from a living animal through a cut or puncture wound in order that the escaping blood might fill a cup or bowl from which he can drink the blood. Moreover, Leviticus 17:10-12 stated the only permissible use ever of blood

(blood as blood); that use featured in accordance with Mosaic Law as a means for atonement from sins, which was accomplished in certain sacrifices when an Aaronic priest put some of the blood of the victims upon the altar, and would pour out beside the altar the rest that had been collected.

We should take note that in the pre-Flood world God permitted His servants to kill an animal in order that its hide might serve for one of the necessities of life, namely, clothing; however, such slaughter of animals as God permitted in the pre-Flood world did not then involve God's servants in taking flesh for food. Because God's faithful servants in the pre-Flood world were never in a scenario where they had necessarily to make a decision as respects what they would do about the slaughtered animal's blood in its blood vessels (which is a decision that God's servants in the post-Flood world must make, for example, when they go after an animal's flesh for food), then God's servants (in the pre-Flood world) did not receive commandment from God that they be sure to pour out upon the ground a slaughtered animal's blood.

Again, blood is clearly shown in the Scriptures to be a sacred fluid in God's sight, and we must respect God's rights in the matter by our not targeting for use any blood as blood. Men are to "keep themselves . . . from [illicit use of] blood" (Acts 21:25), which is not done when one takes to himself another soul's blood or when he stores away any blood for some later use as blood. After blood has been removed from a soul's circulatory system, it ought not to be put to use for its blood-ness. In antiquity, this prohibition against use of blood was certainly respected whenever men would pour blood out onto the ground.

In the Scriptures, we find that God required that His servants, who come into contact with blood when slaughtering an animal for food, responsibly act in a way that ensured that they would not make use of the blood as blood. They drained the blood, but they did so neither for purpose that they might then drink the blood nor for purpose that they might store it away for some later use, this no matter the state into which any or all of the blood's major components might come. God's servants make sure that they act reasonably and responsibly not only in their timely removing blood from the blood vessels of an animal they slaughter for food, but also that they act responsibly in their not taking to themselves for consumption the blood they take from the animal's circulatory vessels. In ancient Israel, God's servants who hunted game saw to it that the soil should soak up the blood they were taking from a slaughtered animal (compare Leviticus 17:13—"As for any man of the sons of Israel or some [proselytized] alien resident who is residing as an alien in your midst who in hunting catches a wild beast or a fowl that may be eaten, he must in that case pour its blood out and cover it with dust").

WHY WE CAN MAKE REFERENCE TO MOSAIC LAW

Some argue against us Jehovah's Witnesses' pointing to passages in the Law of Moses when discussing the blood transfusion issue. Our detractors say that this means that we are placing ourselves under the Law of Moses. That is untrue. Consider what follows for a defense of our use of passages from the Law of Moses.

There were many moral precepts in the Law of Moses that non-Jews abided by, but not because the precepts were in the Law of Moses. No, but it was because of something that Paul brings to our attention in Romans 2:14, 15. And what was that? Paul pointed out that many of the Law's moral precepts ("the things of the law"—Rom 2:14) are kept by non-Jews not out of deference to the Law of Moses, but rather because many non-Jews "do by nature the things of the law" (verse 14 again); they have by nature a knowledge within them—a conscience in them to the effect that theft, adultery, murder, incest, homosexuality, and lying are wrong. But one cannot know by nature all the fundamental ethical norms that Jehovah insists that those who truly would fear Him should observe. What were some of these? Well, many non-Jews who had paid attention to the religion of the Jews would know what they were. Those non-Jews would know that certain moral and spiritual precepts were kept by the Jews because they claimed to respect God's thinking as revealed to them in the writings of Moses, "for from ancient times Moses has had in city after city those who preach him, because he is read aloud in the [Jews'] synagogues on every Sabbath" (Acts 15:21). Those non-Jews would know, for

example, that devout Jews kept themselves not only from adultery and homosexuality, but that they avoided also (1) pre-marital sexual relations (“fornication”), (2) things polluted by idols, and (3) the eating of blood—and that they kept themselves from such things out of a desire to honor their God, Jehovah, Whom the Jews preached as the One Who had really revealed His thinking on such matters through the hand of Moses.

Neither Jews nor non-Jews could by nature readily appreciate the prohibitions numbered above as “(1),” “(2),” and “(3).” Therefore, the following questions might naturally have arisen in the mind of a non-Jew showing interest in Christianity: “Since non-Jewish Christians say they are not under the Law of Moses and accordingly do not submit to the circumcision commandment in the Law of Moses, does this mean that it is now all right for unmarried persons among them to have sexual relations between themselves? Is it all right for them to eat blood—or must they show as much revulsion for the eating of blood as do devout Jews who hold to the Law of Moses? Must they show honor only to the God of the Scriptures, this so that Christians show no honor to other peoples’ gods?”

No, conscience alone could not readily show them how to answer such questions, but the apostolic decree would leave no room for confusion in the minds of non-Jews who were turning to Christ. And what were the answers to their questions? The apostolic decree made it clear that the prohibitions reviewed above were binding on those who would really honor the God of the Holy Scriptures, Jehovah. And they were binding—they were “necessary things” for one’s salvation (Acts 15:28)—not because the Law of Moses had them codified therein, but because they are really fundamental ethical norms, which are grounded in eternal principles. These fundamental ethical norms are things that God wants all His servants to obey. Never could there have been a time in mankind’s history during which Jehovah might have *approved* men’s violation of any of the fundamental ethical norms, this regardless of whether they be things known naturally, or else they be knowable after He (Jehovah) had expressed Himself as respects His will relevant certain moral and spiritual matters.

Now, what we do with the Law of Moses respecting blood is similar to what we do with the Law as respects our determining whether or not God can approve the deliberate termination of a child’s life in a woman’s womb. No, the Law of Moses does not expressly outlaw elective abortions, but there is something in the Law of Moses (Exodus 21:22-25) that lets us know what God’s will is as respects the matter of abortion. When we refer to Exodus 21:22-25, are we putting ourselves under the Law of Moses? Hardly!

QUESTIONS THAT PROBE THE LOGIC OF OUR POSITION

Question.

Is eating human flesh explicitly and categorically condemned in the Scriptures?

Answer.

“Human cannibalism” is a phrase usually used within the context that attaches moral stigma to the eater of another human. That is because human flesh is but rarely a flesh that is casually eaten outside contexts of pagan ritual and emergency. (But then we have a character in the movie *Fried Green Tomatoes* who was casually eaten by at least one customer who was ignorant of what was in the BBQ served him.) In pagan ritual involving cannibalism, it usually follows the murder of the victim, and then he is eaten. I do not think such cannibals are concerned with properly bleeding their unwilling victim. Even if there was emergency need of sustenance—and if cannibalism then occurred—, still nothing is excused if the victim’s death was murder because someone had deliberately hastened the death of the victim. But even if the victim dies after having lingered a while after the accident—and dies apart from murder—will there be present another human standing by and ready to slit the throat and bleed the human victim (upon a determination of victim’s biological death yet well before coagulation of the victim’s blood)? Physicians are capable of determining when irreversible death of a victim has occurred, this so that organs may be harvested well before coagulation of the blood sets in. But if human

X's testimony is that he hurried himself over the craggy precipices and strewn wreckage of his downed aircraft, in which he and victim were passengers, in order to get at decapitated human victim Y (who was seconds earlier decapitated in the crash) so that he (X) might bleed and butcher Y for his flesh before coagulation of Y's blood, then we might have at least some reason for initial pause before we believe all of X's version of the scenario he related, for how did X know that there was going to develop a life-threatening emergency for sustenance facing him, an emergency he foresaw as certain to occur if he did not act to avert it by his butchering Y then and there before coagulation of Y's blood?

Maybe one is legally safe to bleed Y after determination has been made of Y's irreversible (biological) death—and this determination occur before coagulation of Y's blood—and if witnesses survive to corroborate what happened. And if the victim, previous to his death, had expressed before other, fellow victims (of the tragedy they had all suffered in an extremely remote area so that they all had come into very desperate need of sustenance) his desire that the others might make beneficial use of his body, which would be immediately bled following his death from injuries sustained in the accident—, then such circumstances might, in some Christians' consciences, allow that the deceased victim be cannibalized for emergency sustenance. This author at this time does not see where moral or spiritual error in eating some human victim's organs must necessarily attach the eater(s) in absolutely every instance where the victim dies apart from murder, and then, in a timely manner, his warm body is bled and butchered—especially if the victim had survived long enough to grant permission that his body become so donated after his demise. In accordance with such a scenario, the eaters need not immorally involve themselves with that connective tissue we call blood so long as it was bled from the dead victim's vessels. And in that case—under circumstances given above—it does not occur to this author that God would see any moral error in what the eaters did. Where is there necessarily any moral difference in what befalls an organ-donor victim's organs if (1) they are taken immediately after some accident, which caused biological death for the organ-donor victim, so that the organs are kept refrigerated at least for a while in (desperate?) hope of a later—yet still timely—transplantation of them into patients needing them, or (2) they are taken following an accident (of a sort as described above) and eaten—so long as the dying victim had given permission that he be bled and eaten by other victims in dire need of sustenance?

The plain fact of the matter is the rarity, outside the context of organ transplantation, where some human might find himself in an emergency situation so that he resorts to eating the organs of a dead, human victim of some untimely tragedy, and yet the eater do so in a manner that not only may carry the sympathy of a wider society of civilized people, but, far more importantly, does meet God's requirement that unbled flesh not be eaten. **This author does not know of a case where a tragedy's survivors, who cannibalized victims killed in the accident, got the sympathy (lack of condemnation) from a wider society of humans, but also did not fail to meet God's requirement that unbled flesh not be eaten.** The survivors of that plane crash in the Andes Mountains cannibalized the dead victims, and though they were not prosecuted, yet we cannot say that they were free from bloodguilt in God's sight, this because they ate unbled flesh.

Now, in organ transplantation, the blood vessels connected to the organ are severed and the amount of residual blood left in the organ's tissues is an amount incidentally present. One way of bleeding a just-deceased, multiple organ donor so that several of the donor's internal organs can be removed in a timely manner following death of the donor is for a team of surgeons to open up the just-deceased donor from abdomen to neck in order that they might begin snipping the vessels. This should leave a hollowed-out corpse filled with blood if it were not being suctioned off for disposal. But blood that exits the organs, at time of their removal from the deceased donor, ought never to be taken for use as blood.

Question.

Suppose there were in the Law of Moses something that expressly and categorically condemns consuming/using human flesh. Suppose, moreover, that there were an admonition in the Christian Greek Scriptures that said to abstain from human flesh. Would organ transplants be forbidden?

Answer.

Yes, given the imaginary circumstance the questioner has proposed, they would have been forbidden to pre-Christian era Israelites living under the Law of Moses, and if the spirit-inspired, apostolic decree had expressly outlawed any consumption/use of human flesh, then even though the Mosaic Law had been abolished by God, Christians would have still abstained from consuming human flesh.

Suppose the Law of Moses had expressly outlawed the eating of human flesh in addition to an outlawing of that which we do have (namely, the Law's outlawing the consumption of the blood of any flesh). Then in an emergency situation facing two ancient Israelite victims of some sort of tragedy in a wilderness area where both are in critical need of sustenance—but where one of the victims has already become moribund—, then the victim not as near death should have to reason with himself in the following way: 'Here I am likely to die from lack of nourishment. I know I can't drink blood of any sort of flesh, but the Law expressly forbids the consumption of human flesh with no thought that it can be bled, and this even though murder, as in the case at hand, will not be involved in the imminent death of my companion, who was more severely hurt than I. So, not only will I not be able to use my friend's blood, but also I cannot morally use his flesh for increasing my strength and improving my chances for surviving until someone with a camel might chance by this gorge.'

Now let us indulge in a bit of popcorn metaphysics. Suppose the same thing about an imaginary version of the Law of Moses again, namely, a Law of Moses that had outlawed not only the consumption of the blood of any sort of flesh, but had also expressly outlawed consumption of human flesh. Now, imagine there were an ancient, pre-Christian era Israelite—let us call him Simon—living under that Law of Moses, but he suddenly finds himself whisked away to a time future to him—in fact, whisked away to our time. Not only that, but he finds himself present in a hospital in a room where surgeons are removing the heart from someone, but he also sees a surgeon lifting up another heart from a tray and putting it into the chest of the patient. He is told later, of course, that what he saw was a heart transplant being performed.

Surgeon: "Isn't modern medicine, such as you saw practiced here today, a thing of great benefit to mankind, Simon?"

Simon: "What I saw today is something God does not approve. He wants us not to take the flesh of another human."

Surgeon: "Simon, Simon, Simon! I have read the Law of Moses, and it clearly was talking about eating human flesh. You know, chewing it up between your teeth and swallowing it down for it to become digested. But we aren't feeding men flesh when we transplant an organ. It does not get digested, and it does not pass through the intestines for discharge. Surely, Simon, God wants us to get the most we can out of the things that are the result of His handiwork. And we surgeons are here to help that sort of thing along. Why, the patient you saw would be dead if it were not for our ability to use something of God's great handiwork so as to make it keep on working in order to save life, Simon. Simon?"

How should Simon answer? In keeping with this imaginary version of the Law of Moses we are using for our illustration, Simon should have to reason that the surgeon's logic is flawed. God is not so petty that He would see a moral difference between (1) one's tying a human organ into place inside a man—even if it does continue to work to keep the recipient alive—, on the one hand, and (2) a tragedy victims' [sic] eating a bled organ from a donor who had given consent for the procedure before he died, this for the victims' survival. And that would have to be the logic in such a Law of Moses even if, in the above two cases of where human flesh had been taken, the blood prohibition had not been violated, and even if, in both cases, the life in persons in desperate need of the flesh was being promoted, and, of course, even if murder was no part of either scenario, and the donor facing death had given his consent.

Question.

Is not the taking of blood, whenever mentioned in the Bible, always associated with the killing of animals?

Answer.

The logic in the principles of God's Word covers anything wicked and novel that might have begun to threaten God's people as respects commandment upon them to keep themselves from use of any blood as blood, this no matter it be the blood of dietarily clean animals, the blood of dietarily unclean animals, or the blood of a human. God has expressed Himself as respects the blood of any sort of flesh.

Question.

Is not the differentiation of 'primary' components from 'fractions' purely an arbitrary one that finds no scriptural support? The very idea or concept of being able to make any sort of differentiation opens up the whole issue for debate, does it not?

Answer.

In ancient Israel, the pouring out of whole blood onto the ground for a disposal of blood as blood was the only practical means at hand for ensuring compliance to God's law, this so that the blood might not become collectable as a unit of blood for it to be put to some use as blood. If ancient Israelites had been told by God to dispose of a certain number of chariots, then must we reason that no part of the chariot should ever again be put to some use? Suppose they were to take the chariot's metal parts and melt them down in a furnace so that the metal no longer presents as chariot metal? Would they be in violation of God's law if they reused the metal? No, because the melted-down metal no longer presents as chariot metal; moreover, if the metal is reused, *it is not because the metal had necessarily to be metal from a chariot that gives it its usefulness again.*

What, though, if some Israelites under command to dispose of a certain number of chariots happened not to have ability to melt down the metal and re-claim the molten mass? In that event, they should resort to destroying the chariots by ripping up the metal carriages into separately disposable pieces, this so that no practical use can be made of the chariot as a chariot. Something like this is what happens to a major component of blood when it is decomposed through removal of one or more of its subcomponents. If ancient Israel had had sophisticated chemistry laboratories available to them, then were it another way they might have obeyed God's command that they not design to make use of blood as blood, because then they could have resorted to removing for some use the subcomponents comprising blood's major (identity-giving) components.

Abstinence from illicit blood should be every bit a matter of a Christian's care for his keeping his conscience undefiled as it should be when it comes to his need to keep his conscience undefiled as respects idolatry (illicit worship) or fornication (illicit sexual conduct). **Obedience to God's commands is necessary for salvation.** Acts 15:28, 29 is a place in the Scriptures that gives us three of the several commands that are necessary for us to keep if we will receive salvation.

Question.

Is it not so that nowhere in the Bible is there a singling out of human blood under explicit command that it not be consumed?

Answer.

Blood of a human is blood of a sort of flesh, and Leviticus 17th chapter expressly says "any blood" of "any flesh." The prohibition against consuming the blood of any sort of flesh for hoped-for benefit catches human blood in its logic.

Question.

Remember the “sound” reasoning used to argue against accepting an [organ donation](#)? Didn't that sound very reasonable at the time? Didn't that follow “logic”?

Answer.

We are an organization—actually, the earth's only international brotherhood—that is improving, this because of blessing of God's holy spirit upon us. We conscientiously strive, even in the face of death, to be loyal to what we believe the Scriptures to teach. If we believe the Scriptures teach something, we will obey out of desire to hold a good conscience towards God. It is neither crippling, morbid fear of men nor a swelling admiration of personalities that drives us in this resolve, but is “love out of a clean heart and out of a good conscience and out of faith without hypocrisy” (1 Timothy 1:5) that moves us.

We should expect change for the better among those who truly are God's people. If the Devil were behind such changes, then we should conclude that he is divided against himself. But if God's holy spirit is behind the doctrinal improvements among Jehovah's Witnesses, then for one to invoke the changes as signal of poor authority structure in our organization means that he is fighting against God.

The organization identified as The Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses is uniquely in possession of a certain body of teachings. This body of teachings must identify the only organization that God uses in getting a worldwide witness to the Kingdom preached before the end comes. So, in other doctrines that I may or may not presently understand, I ask myself Where does error here land us, if error there be? If there is error here, does it land us in blindly following men into a violation of moral law? into spiritual error against what the Kingdom of God should mean in our life? into harm that cannot be reversed by God? If there is error that does not involve us in violation of God's fundamental ethical norms, then God may tolerate the error for a while without His saying, ‘Well, that's it! I am through with the organization built up with my name on it, for it blasphemes me, and I will look for an invisible (known only to me) “congregation.”’ Never!

Consider the fact that there was significant spiritual error among some Judean Christians for a while. And think of how Peter's bad example, in which he stood condemned until his repentance, affected others—or might have affected others. Yes, consider it from the standpoint as respects how Jewish Christians, who might have been with the apostle Peter in Antioch, might have been emboldened by Peter's spiritually and morally bad example to draw away from socializing with uncircumcised Gentile Christians. But in timely fashion, such error was corrected. But who else might have been poorly affected? Well, consider next how foolish any offended Gentile Christian might have been who might have said, ‘I must quit listening to the teachings of Jesus' apostles, for they can be in serious error—and some have been—, for one of them would let a caste develop between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians. Moral error has gone on too long in the apostle Peter, and now I see that Peter must even yet harbor bad sentiment against us Gentiles.’ If the complainer were to leave and begin to work as an apostate vilifying the apostles, whom does he have to blame but primarily himself for his missing out on salvation? He threw out the baby with the bath water! And how should any Jewish Christians, who let themselves be corrected as respects their prejudice, answer the taunts of that apostate who might deride them with the words: ‘Well, you finally see the error of your ways because you came to a better understanding of the Scriptures on your own, did you? Or isn't your change of conduct effected in the same manner as it was effected before you got new light . . . for aren't you now as you were then just blindly following the examples of prominent men among you? I suspect you couldn't have rubbed two scriptures together on the issue when you first began saying what you are saying now, namely, “I have changed because of what I see in God's Word.” Nah! Your conduct now is as it was then, for you are blindly following men now as you were then, too. So, how can you say that you won't again be led into error because of your blindly following men? You people can't have the truth, because God wouldn't tolerate the errors I have seen and experienced among you people.’ And so on and so on. But can we not grasp that the apostate's argument is his speciously reasoned concept of things? We might understand how ‘he went wrong,’ but we must not appreciate that ‘he went wrong’ or stand in agreement with any apostasy, no matter its motivation! God was still teaching those Jewish Christians, albeit

through imperfect overseers. So to reject the congregation would be the same as rejecting God's authority.—Hebrews 13:7, 17.

Question.

By heat conversion the major components of blood are destroyed by a manmade procedure. Does this procedure allow that Jehovah's Witnesses could store for some use (e.g., some agricultural use) blood that is first cooked under heat?

Answer.

In reading the material in the next paragraph, readers should know that the answer this author has given the question above reflects what is presently his conscience.

Because some blood was especially targeted for collection and storage so that it might later be put to some use (e.g., some agricultural use), then there is no such thing as an incidental presence of any major components in that amount stored. Therefore, it seems to this author that the unit of blood that will be put to some use should first have to become a unit wherein the major components have become disassembled and some subcomponent isolated from the rest, lest the logic informing the scenario betray a lack of concern that blood as blood not be used. The subcomponent(s) of the major components should first have to be *specifically removed* from the unit of blood before those subcomponents might be used.

Appendix

I) Ravensbrück and *blutwurst*

The following concerns a situation that occurred in the Nazi Ravensbrück Concentration Camp, which like the other camps was controlled by the Schutzstaffel or SS. Unlike the other camps, this one was for women prisoners. In 1942, 275 of them were Jehovah's Witnesses, also called Bible Students.^{fm1} One of these was Gertrud Poetzing. Significantly, her husband was "Martin Poetzing, who later served as a member of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses."^{fm2} The "Block Senior" or overseer of the Witness barracks was Margaret Buber. She reports a situation when a minority, about 25 of them, refused to eat blood sausage, or *blutwurst*.^{fm3} The following will address questions about this event, with page references to the book by Margaret Buber, *Under Two Dictators*.

- **Were the female Jehovah's Witnesses fully informed of the blood stance published in their literature (which appeared during 1927-1940)?**

No. Margaret Buber reports that this insight into the scriptural use of blood was independently gleaned from personal Bible reading. (Page 236.)

- **Did they have a variety of food rations to choose from?**

No. Margaret Buber reports specifically that "pod vegetables disappeared entirely, the fat in food became less and less, the weekly portion of fat stopped altogether, and jam was reduced to about a spoonful a week." She adds that the sugar was gone for them, and all they could scrounge was inferior fish paste and unpalatable vegetable salad. Thus, the *blutwurst* became a "superior item of food." (Page 236.)

- **Was any alternative food offered to them?**

Margaret Buber reports that she offered them liver sausage, but that they rejected it to her frustration. (Page 236.) The reason for this additional rejection could be that they had sound suspicion that blood was still a likely ingredient. Since that was known then, a moment's reflection on their likely suspicion on blood being an ingredient would have diffused her frustration.

- **Was it always about 25 out of the 275 who rejected the *blutwurst*?**

No. Margaret Buber reports that the minority view grew in number, and she describes all 275 of them as a “peaceful Bible Student Block,” which agitated the SS enough to relocate a hundred miscreants, called “Asocials,” into their barracks. This may be an unlikely reprisal if it remained a minority. As they were all in the same physical condition and had peace and unity among themselves, it appears that the minority view won out. (Pages 236-7.)^{fn4}

- **Did Gertrud Poetzinger eat *blutwurst*?**

If the answer is ‘no,’ that she was among the initial 25 abstainers, that would be fine and commendable. If the answer is ‘yes,’ that may be interesting on a historical level, but on a religious level, it would be less than relevant, due to repentance. The ones who did eat it did so initially out of ignorance of the controversy. Then after personal Bible reading made the insight known, it was variance of conscience under the hostile conditions Nazi concentration camps were notorious for that permitted others to continue eating it. Shortly thereafter, the view of rejecting it grew in number to the point where they were seen as a threat to the SS's control. Therefore, the ones who ate it initially must have repented!—Acts 17:30.

In conclusion, there are many examples of Jehovah's Witnesses being faithful to God's law on the proper use of blood, even under harsh and pressing circumstances.

Footnotes

1. Buber, Margaret. Under Two Dictators. New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1949. 235-7. (Author's surname is also known as Buber-Neumann.)
2. Jehovah's Witnesses: Proclaimers of God's Kingdom. Brooklyn: Watchtower Bible and Track Society of New York, 1993. 158.
3. Under Two Dictators. *supra* note 1, 236.
4. Krause-Schmitt, Ursula. “Resistance and Persecution of Female Jehovah's Witnesses.” Persecution and Resistance of Jehovah's Witnesses During the Nazi Regime. Ed. Hans Hesse. Bremen: Berghahn Books, 2001. 200-1.

II) The Position on Organ Transplants

“Agreeing to an organ transplant or organ donation is a personal decision.”

<http://www.jw-media.org/beliefs/medical.htm>

In an effort to discredit Jehovah's Witnesses and portray them negatively, some religious opposers advance an accusation regarding the position of Jehovah's Witnesses on organ transplants between the years 1967 and 1980.

Did Jehovah's Witnesses zigzag on the acceptability of organ transplant therapy during 1961, 1967 and 1980? As we shall see after an honest examination, the choice was always ultimately left to the conscience. Also, there was never a danger of being disfellowshipped, and while this case became similar to the case of blood

transfusions, it falls far short of being equivalent.

Included also is a consideration of what other faiths believed at the time, and how and when organ transplantation improved into the relatively safe therapy that it is today.

What was the position over time?

In the 1950's there was no mention of any transplant procedures in Jehovah's Witnesses' publications, as transplant procedures were still in their infancy. It was in 1961 however, that brief mention of the subject was first made in their doctrinal magazine *The Watchtower* of August 1, in its Questions From Readers section. The question was:

“Is there anything in the Bible against giving one's eyes (after death) to be transplanted to some living person?”

The answer, being a single paragraph, was:

“The question of placing one's body or parts of one's body at the disposal of men of science or doctors at one's death for purposes of scientific experimentation or replacement in others is frowned upon by certain religious bodies. *However, it does not seem that any Scriptural principle or law is involved. It therefore is something that each individual must decide for himself.* If he is satisfied in his own mind and conscience that this is a proper thing to do, then he can make such provision, and no one else should criticize him for doing so. On the other hand, no one should be criticized for refusing to enter into any such agreement.” (italics added)

As we can see, no objection to organ transplants is presented here, and the decision is left to the person's conscience to accept or refuse.

During the 1960's, the subject for debate was the question of giving transplants to living persons for experimental purposes. In fact, the University Professor of Anesthesiology at Harvard's Medical Faculty published his famous June 16, 1966 article denouncing an extensive series of ethically-questionable medical experiments (Henry K. Beecher, “Ethics and Clinical Research.” *New England Journal of Medicine*, 1966; 274: 1354-60). Soon after, in 1967 there appeared another famous work in the same vein: *Human Guinea Pigs*, by the British doctor M. H. Pappworth.

It was at this time that *The Watchtower* of November 15, 1967 commented on organ donation in its Questions From Readers section, in response to the following:

“Is there any Scriptural objection to donating one's body for use in medical research or to accepting organs for transplant from such a source?”

Rather than present a single paragraph leaving the matter to the conscience, commendably the article attempted to ascertain God's view of the matter by considering scriptures and principles. However, it also compared accepting a transplanted organ to cannibalism. On that it stated:

“Those who submit to such operations are thus living off the flesh of another human. That is cannibalistic. However, in allowing man to eat animal flesh Jehovah God did not grant permission for humans to try to perpetuate their lives by cannibalistically taking into their bodies human flesh, whether chewed or in the form of whole organs or body parts taken from others.”

Granted, this opinion was taken from the article “Medical cannibalism” appearing in the *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, edited by James Hastings (Volume 3, page 199), which it referred to and quoted from in its next paragraph. While the response included this comparison in an attempt to be balanced and informative, it also had the potential to offend and distract from the deciding power of the conscience also presented in the same Questions From Readers. Therefore the comparison to cannibalism proved to be unfortunate.

However, even with the unfortunate caution expressed above, the same Questions From Readers article did in fact leave the decision up to the person, as it later stated:

“Baptized Christians have dedicated their lives, bodies included, to do the will of Jehovah their Creator. In view of this, can such a person donate his body or part of it for unrestricted use by doctors or others? Does a human have a God-given right to dedicate his body organs to scientific experimentation? Is it proper for him to allow such to be done with the body of a loved one? These are questions worthy of serious consideration.”

Further highlighting the role of the individual's conscience, it closed with these comments:

“[T]he Christian can decide in such a way as to avoid unnecessary mutilation and any possible misuse of the body. Thus he will be able to have a clear conscience before God.—1 Pet. 3:16.

It should be evident from this discussion that Christians who have been enlightened by God's Word do not need to make these decisions simply on the basis of personal whim or emotion. They can consider the divine principles recorded in the Scriptures and use these in making personal decisions as they look to God for direction, trusting him and putting their confidence in the future that he has in store for those who love him.—Prov. 3:5, 6; Ps. 119:105.”

Thus, it is important to note that the same article also left much to the person's conscience.

Shortly thereafter in the medical world, in December 1967, the first successful human to human heart transplant was performed by Professor Christiaan Barnard at Groote Schuur Hospital in South Africa (the patient lived 18 days, which was considered successful for a high-risk experimental surgery, as such transplants were at the time).^{[fn1](#)}

During the following years from 1968 to 1975, there were some occasional and brief mentioning of organ transplants in Jehovah's Witnesses' magazines, *The Watchtower* and *Awake!*, all of them expressing medical concerns like inherent transplant risks and the side effects of immunosuppressive drugs, and generally referenced non-Witness works and authors (the last of such appeared in the September 1, 1975 issue of *The Watchtower*, page 519 under “Insight on the News” which noted documented cases of post-operation emotional trauma and upheaval).

Around the same time, the immunosuppressive effect of a substance called cyclosporin (alternatively spelled cyclosporine and ciclosporin) was discovered at the earliest in 1972 and at the latest in 1976. This was followed by a series of experiments attempting to overcome the primary practical problem organ transplants were facing: tissue rejection. These experiments went well and this substance was officially approved for medical use in 1983.^{[fn2](#)} It was also during the late 1970's and early 1980's that a satisfactory answer had been reached on the exact moment of death. It is no coincidence that the laws and regulations for transplants began to appear around 1980 (for example, the Spanish law on organ extraction and transplant of 1979 and the corresponding 1984 law in the United States). Thus, it was in the early 1980's, and especially from 1983, that organ transplants stopped being experimental procedures and became accepted medical therapy.^{[fn3](#)} In fact, from that year and even into the 1990's, many churches of Christendom and other religions began releasing official resolutions in favor of

organ transplantation.

Today it is an accepted medical treatment.

After the above mentioned September 1, 1975 issue of *The Watchtower*, there was no reference to the practice of transplants in Jehovah's Witnesses' publications. It was not until *The Watchtower* of March 15, 1980 that a Questions From Readers article was again published on transplants, which had this exchange:

“Should congregation action be taken if a baptized Christian accepts a human organ transplant, such as of a cornea or a kidney?”

The answer began with:

“Regarding the transplantation of human tissue or bone from one human to another, this is a matter for conscientious decision by each one of Jehovah's Witnesses.”

This article is clearly more focused on the role of the Christian conscience, specifying that each one must make a personal decision. Some Christians, it stated, may view transplants as cannibalistic and unacceptable, while others may view them as acceptable. This position continues to be the one that Jehovah's Witnesses have today. The same article concluded:

“Clearly, personal views and conscientious feelings vary on this issue of transplantation. ... While the Bible specifically forbids consuming blood, there is no Biblical command pointedly forbidding the taking in of other human tissue. For this reason, each individual faced with making a decision on this matter should carefully and prayerfully weigh matters and then decide conscientiously what he or she could or could not do before God. It is a matter for personal decision. (Gal. 6:5) The congregation judicial committee would not take disciplinary action if someone accepted an organ transplant.”

Thus, after considering what was said in 1961, 1967 and 1980, it can be seen that the conscience played the ultimate deciding factor. It was up to the individual to decide, with no disciplinary sword of Damocles dangling above. Interestingly, as pointed out above, organ transplant therapy experienced a turning point shortly thereafter in 1983, when cyclosporin was approved for medical use.

No threat of expulsion

Even though the 1967 Questions From Readers included the unfortunate comparison to cannibalism, it specified that transplants are a matter of personal decision, with no mention of disciplinary measures.

To see this matter more clearly, contrast it with the question of blood transfusion. The idea was expressed for the first time in 1945 that blood transfusions violated divine law on the sanctity of blood; nevertheless, it was not until 1961 that it was specified that the matter was of sufficient gravity so as to disfellowship from the congregations any who disregarded this divine requirement and displayed an unrepentant attitude.^{[fn4](#)}

Has the same thing happened with organ transplants? After the 1967 article, did a subsequent publication state that to accept a transplant was a matter of sufficient gravity to disfellowship unrepentant members?

In 1968 the book *The Truth that Leads to Eternal Life* was published which was a study guide that explained the fundamental teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses to interested ones. This book considered the sanctity of blood in depth, but did not even mention the matter of organ transplants.

Besides, the candidates for baptism then, as today, examine the fundamental Biblical doctrines of Jehovah's

Witnesses before accepting them, for which they had the books *Your Word Is a Lamp to My Foot* (1967) and *Organization for Kingdom-Preaching and Disciple-Making* (1972). Among these questions on the moral norms of Jehovah's Witnesses were covered, included the position on blood transfusions. Nevertheless, *nothing in those books mentioned anything about organ transplants.*

Therefore, despite what was expressed in the 1967 Questions From Readers and the medical concerns expressed in the Witnesses' magazines on organ transplants from 1968 to 1975, it itself was *not grounds for disfellowshipping* and therefore no one was disfellowshipped over it.

Contemporary Religious Views

On the other hand, were Jehovah's Witnesses an exception by expressing a negative viewpoint on organ transplants? Leaving aside some medical opinions against transplants since religion deals with ethical issues and frequently questions scientific advances (a current example is the case of utilizing stem-cells or not), the experiments on transplants provoked great controversy, especially at the end of the 1960's, and the religious sector played a noticeable role.

The Catholic Church, for example, presented serious objections in the past to homotransplant, or transplants among creatures of the same species (E. Chiavacci, *Morale della vita fisica*, EDB, Bologna. 1976: 64-81). In the Catholic book *Problems of Sanitary Ethics (Problemi Di Etica Sanitaria*, 1992; Ancora, Milano: 189), the Jesuit Giacomo Perico recognized that not too long ago transplants still presented "*serious reservations of moral character*" for Catholics. (italics original) The same thing can be said of other religions. For example, it was not until 1987-88 that Judaism had officially expressed a favorable opinion regarding transplants (see, for example, Alfredo Mordechai Rabello, "Donazione di organi. Comunicato dell'Assemblea dei Rabbini d'Italia," *Ha Keillah*, June 2000: 12-13; Riccardo Di Segni, "Il punto di vista dell'ebraismo," in "La donazione e il trapianto di organi e di tessuti," *Punto Omega*, December 2000 [anno II, n. 4]: 34).

The Muslim Religious Counsel rejected organ donation as late as 1983, although it later completely changed its position and now accepts the procedure, with some conditions.

The Gypsy community does not have its own religion, but its traditional beliefs tend to be opposed to organ donation, for they think that the body should remain intact during a year after death.

In Shintoism, the traditional religion of Japan, it used to be considered a serious crime to mutilate a dead body, according to E. Narnihira in his article "Shinto Concept Concerning the Dead Human Body." Additionally, he reports that: "To this day it is difficult to obtain consent from bereaved families for donation or dissection for medical education or pathological anatomy . . . the Japanese regard them all in the sense of injuring a dead body." Families are concerned that they not injure the *itai*, the relationship between the dead and the bereaved.^{[ftn5](#)}

Therefore, a number of religious groups have opposed organ transplants at some time, and a number with time have changed their viewpoint. Similarly, while Jehovah's Witnesses always believed the conscience was the ultimate determining factor, the concerns about cannibalism were first presented in 1967 and were later reduced in significance in 1980. Although, as we have also seen, Jehovah's Witnesses were never forced to accept that opinion on cannibalism under threat of expulsion. The main concern was always about having "a clear conscience before God."

The Difference between Organ Transplants and Blood Transfusions

Highlighting this is a case of a youth whose experience was published in *The Watchtower* of November 15, 1969, "Appreciating Jehovah's Protection," pages 700-2. This is not a case of someone passing away, but of someone relating an experience after recovering from surgery. The question this person was faced with was not

one of organ transplants but of blood transfusions, although at one point his doctor asked him if he would be willing to donate a kidney. Pointedly, his reaction is a good example of the difference between the position of Jehovah's Witnesses regarding blood transfusions and that regarding organ transplants. When his doctor offered him two possible procedures, one that included blood transfusions and another that did not include them, he chose the later. But when asked if he would give his consent to donate a kidney, this was his reaction:

“I told him he would get a frank and thorough answer to his inquiry after we had had a family discussion of God's Word on the issue.” (page 701)

It was not until the following day that he gave his response, which was negative. This clearly illustrates that the question of organ transplants was not comparable to that of blood transfusions for this reason: The donation option was not categorically prohibited (like the blood transfusion option), but one left to personal decision (or consulting with one's family, as in the case of this youth).

In Summary

The role of the individual's conscience has always been held as the deciding factor on the acceptability of organ transplants. Unlike with blood transfusions, there was never a disfellowshipping or disciplinary consequence for accepting them. While orally ingesting blood as well as blood transfusion is unacceptable, it is not so with organs.

Thus, critics should be careful not to use this issue to promote hysteria, misunderstanding, or intolerance.

Footnotes

1. “Heart transplantation.” Wikipedia. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heart_transplantation> (September 10, 2008)
2. Upton, Harriet. “Origin of drugs in current use: the cyclosporin story.” 2001. The Mostly Medical Part of the World of Fungi. <www.world-of-fungi.org/Mostly_Medical/Harriet_Upton/Harriet_Upton.htm> (September 8, 2008). “Ciclosporin.” Wikipedia. <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ciclosporin> (September 8, 2008)
3. “Ciclosporin.” *supra* note 2.
4. “Immovable For The Right Worship.” July 1, 1945: 199-201. “Questions From Readers.” January 15, 1961: 63-4.
5. “Religious Views of Organ & Tissue Donation.” The Transplant Network. <web.archive.org/web/20050224131421/http://www.thetransplantnetwork.com/religiousviews.shtml> (September 8, 2008)

III) Were vaccinations ever prohibited?

“Jehovah's Witnesses have no objection to vaccines in general. Some vaccines contain minor blood fractions, and use of these is a matter of personal choice.” <http://www.jw-media.org/beliefs/medical.htm>

Some critics have erroneously claimed that publications of Jehovah's Witnesses prohibited the use of vaccines from 1931 to 1952, and that they were permitted later. Apparently, they use this claim in an attempt to discredit our present position on blood transfusions, making the connection directly or indirectly that our position on vaccinations was equal to, and as firm as, our position on blood, and therefore the later will also change. It is also a matter of presenting the image that Jehovah's Witnesses do not have any credibility on medical matters.

Response

Many detractors of Jehovah's Witnesses demonstrate negligence when not checking original documents to verify the validity of their statements.

For example, the statement that as late as the 1950's Jehovah's Witnesses taught that a Christian should not get vaccinated is easily proved false. As early as 1944, their publishing arm, the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, required all of their representatives to be vaccinated.

In 1944-45, Alexander H. Macmillan was encouraging Jehovah's Witnesses imprisoned because of their being conscientious objectors to be vaccinated. He wrote: "One of the more serious problems I had to deal with was vaccinations. Some of our boys in one prison . . . refused to submit . . . I told them, We're wasting time talking about the evils of vaccination because much could be said both ways . . . Furthermore, *all of us who visit our foreign branches are vaccinated or we stay at home.*" (Alexander H. Macmillan, *Faith on the March*, pp. 188, 189) (italics added). Also it is notable the fact that, of the approximately 4,300 Witnesses imprisoned in U.S. prisons during World War II (according to Cushman R. AND., *Civil Liberties in the OR.S.* p. 96-97, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, N. AND. 1956; Zygmunt J.F. *Jehovah's Witnesses in the USES 1942-1976*. Social Compass 24, 47, 1977), this group alone refused to accept the obligatory vaccinations.

Since a number of individual Witnesses continued rejecting vaccines (apparently because they considered it to be unscriptural), the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses saw the need to set the matter straight. This was done in *The Watchtower* of December 15, 1952 in its Questions From Readers section, which stated in part: "The matter of vaccination is one for the individual that has to face it to decide for himself." Then after considering some relevant scriptures, Genesis 6:1-4, 9:4 and Leviticus 17:10-14, 18:23, 24, it stated: "Hence all objection to vaccination on Scriptural grounds seems to be lacking."

Up to this point, we can easily see the falsehood that Jehovah's Witnesses were prohibited from accepting vaccines throughout the 1950's. But, had it been previously prohibited? Why did some think that the use of vaccines were unscriptural? Why do they say that vaccines were prohibited in 1931?

This claim originated in an article that appeared in the February 4, 1931 issue of their magazine *The Golden Age*, in which scriptural reasons were used indicating the rejection of vaccines. While the article certainly exists, the critics usually do not mention the whole truth of the matter. The article was not an editorial article, that is to say, the publisher of the magazine did not write it, instead it was a contribution of a certain Chat A. Patillo of Virginia (EE.UU.). The publisher did not specify if he agreed or not with the opinion of Mr. Patillo, and it is a significant fact that the article was presented like a mere contribution of someone foreign to the magazine. The matter was not presented like a prohibition, but as an opinion that could help make a personal decision.

Not less significant it is the fact that, apparently, *The Watchtower* never mentioned the subject. *The Watchtower* was until 1940 the only internal publication for Jehovah's Witnesses, where they treated Biblical matters of greater importance for the Witnesses, while the magazine *The Golden Age* was a publication for the public that touched more on general matters, in a way similar to the modern magazine and successor *Awake!*. No critic has been capable of showing any mention against vaccines neither in *The Watchtower* nor in any other publication aside from *The Golden Age*. No indication exists that the use of vaccines was considered as serious as to deserve any type of disciplinary measures—certainly not disfellowshipping. Really, the position on the matter was very different from the present position regarding blood.

On the other hand, the opinion that vaccines could represent a violation of divine law on blood is understandable considering that the serum of some vaccines was produced in animal blood. It is therefore very important to consider the historical context of this and other articles in *The Golden Age*.

This takes us to another question: aside from the article by Mr. Patillo (in *The Golden Age* of February 4, 1931), very critical commentaries about vaccines, not from a Biblical point of view but from a medical point of view,

were included on several occasions. Were those somewhat unwarranted comments of ignorant people, like the enemies of Jehovah's Witnesses focus on?

Probably the first time that a critical opinion was mentioned on vaccines was in *The Golden Age* of October 12, 1921, and the last negative mention was in the *Consolation* (successor of *The Golden Age*) magazine, of May 31, 1939. It was not a frequently treated subject; appointments are found, the majority of them brief, once each year or every other year on average (which is not a lot for a magazine that was published every other week).

Our detractors do not put these things in their proper perspective. They do not have in consideration the common understanding that many other people besides the Witnesses had at that time. Vaccination was highly controversial in its early development, with valid arguments and reputable authorities on both sides. Against vaccinations were people like,

1. The respected naturalist Alfred Russell Wallace.
2. Professor Charles Creighton, who wrote an article against vaccinations in the 1888 *Encyclopedia Britannica*.^{fm1}
3. The famous writer George Bernard Shaw.

The publications of Jehovah's Witnesses endeavored to present updated and current medical information to its readers, and in justice cannot be criticized any more than scientists and other religious authorities of the time.

What was the thinking in regards to inoculations and vaccinations in the early 20th century? What was the method that was used to inoculate people? The main method through the 19th century, and into the early 20th century, was to infect a person with a variant of one "mild" (or weakened) strain of the virus; later, the infected person was to return after seven days when the pustules appeared on them; the pustule or scab was scraped off and was used to directly infect another person, who would then return in seven days. Now, who today would accept this procedure to be done on them and their children? Therefore, perhaps putting the comments of *The Golden Age* in their proper historical perspective can help one to see how blind and stubborn some of our critics can be in their campaigns against Jehovah's Witnesses:

In a classic understatement, the 1959 *Encyclopedia Britannica*, under the heading "Vaccine Therapy," stated:

"At mid-20th century, adequate statistical data concerning the effectiveness in humans of some of the virus vaccines was still lacking."

In 1913, the British *National Anti-Vaccination League* (of which Alfred Russel Wallace, mentioned above, was a member) published a booklet entitled *Is vaccination a Disastrous Delusion?* The booklet condemned the practice as "a monstrous and indefensible outrage upon the common sense and sacred personal rights of every human being, and especially every Englishman."

The writer George Bernard Shaw, mentioned above, a former member of the *Health Committee of London Borough Council*, published statements like the following, among others: "The obligatory vaccination is a crime and should be punished as such. ...The vaccine kills more people than smallpox." (From the article *Vaccination is a crime*, taken from the magazine *Naturalism*, of Barcelona). "At present, intelligent people do not have their children vaccinated, nor does the law now compel them to. The result is not, as the Jennerians prophesied, the extermination of the human race by smallpox; *on the contrary more people are now killed by vaccination than by smallpox.*" (Published in the *Irish Times* of August 9, 1944) (italics added).

In the autumn of 1901, in Philadelphia, there were no fewer than thirty-six cases of tetanus, or lockjaw, which were admitted to have resulted from vaccination, and nearly all were fatal. After a study of these and fifty-nine

similar cases, a prominent Philadelphia physician and professor, Joseph McFarland, an ardent defender of vaccinations, came to the conclusion that—even where the utmost precautions had been taken—the danger lay in the transmission into the vaccine itself of the disease-causing agent (namely, as we know today, the presence of a virus in the vaccine). Then, ignoring the fact that the disease-causing agent was in the very fluid discharged from diseased sores, and that the agent was still left dangerously intact (insufficiently weakened) in the vaccine prepared from the discharge, he still ignorantly recommended preparation of the vaccine, this despite the fact that the medical science of his day was not equal to effectual implementation of his recommendation that greater care be used in preparing the vaccine (John Pitcairn, *The Fallacy Of Vaccination*, 1911, citing of Joseph McFarland, *Tetanus And Vaccination – An Analytical Study Of Ninety-five Cases Of This Rare Complication*, 1902).

In England and Wales we find that, from 1881 to 1907, the Registrar-General reported 1,108 deaths from vaccination, the deaths averaging one every week during the first sixteen years (*The Register Report of Births, Deaths and Marriages in England and Wales*, vols. XLIV-LXX). Bear in mind that these 1,108 deaths are all admitted, by those performing vaccinations, to have been due to vaccination. In this matter, Professor Alfred Wallace said that in England and Wales alone vaccination is the probable cause every year for 10,000 deaths—deaths by five diseases of the most terrible and disgusting character, introduced by the vaccine virus (Alfred Russell Wallace. LL.D., *Forty-Five Years Of Registration Statistics, Proving Vaccination To Be Both Useless And Dangerous*, second edition, London, 1889, p. 38).

Safer forms of vaccination were just being developed in the early 20th century. It was not until 1931 that Woodruff and Goodpasture used the chicken egg as a culture medium for many viruses (Woodruff, A. and E. Goodpasture, *The susceptibility of the chorio-allantoic membrane of chick embryos to infection with the fowl-pox virus*, 1931. A.m. J. Path. 7:209-222). Further, it was not until the early 1950's that Jonas Salk developed a safer and more effective vaccine (Jane Smith, *Patenting The Sun*). For instance, it was not until 1954 that large scale tests were done on Salk's vaccines, proving their effectiveness.

Conclusion

Much more data and many more opinions of the time could be mentioned, but presented here is enough to show that Jehovah's Witnesses were totally justified in the Twenties and Thirties to have a negative opinion on this subject. It is not coherent to criticize them alone by a position shared by many other people, even religious ministers of other confessions; and what was stated on them in our publications was echoed elsewhere as concern was common at the time (even in modern times many voices are raised against vaccination procedures).

These attacks usually finish with a melodramatic allusion to Jehovah's Witnesses who supposedly died for refusing to accept a vaccination (again trying to establish a parallel with the abstinence to blood transfusions). Already we have shown that no official position existed nor were disciplinary measures taken. However, can anyone give the name of a single Jehovah's Witness who died for rejecting a vaccination? Even if someone could offer a name or a statistic, even approximate, it would have to be contrasted with those who actually died from accepting vaccinations! We can only imagine how many people in those years were infected with poliomyelitis and other avoidable illnesses, and how many actually died of tetanus, rabies, influenza, or other infections due to vaccinations. Of course, it would be unfair to blame these deaths on the clergy who collectively promoted vaccinations, since at the time many of them were actually stating the same thing as the Witnesses.

It is sad that our critics do not publish these facts. Need we wonder why? Only two reasons are possible: they are ignorant or they deliberately deceive and desire to draw to others into ignorance. Regardless, as with the [organ transplant issue](#), the vaccination issue is used to promote a lack of understanding and intolerance.

Footnotes

1. “Dr. Charles Creighton M.A. M.D section on ‘Vaccination’ in the ninth edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, published in 1888” is seen here: www.whale.to/a/creighton4.html.

Additional Reading

A) How should a Christian view using blood as fertilizer, as animal food or in some other way that does not involve his eating it?

“Questions From Readers,” *The Watchtower*, October 15, 1981, pp. 30-1.
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In matters of this sort a Christian’s thinking and actions should reflect his Bible-based regard for the sacredness of blood.

Many persons who do not know of or care about God’s thinking condone the use of human blood for blood transfusions. Also, in some places, persons eat animal blood in food, such as in blood sausage. Nor does misuse of blood stop there. Some businessmen try to profit from the blood of slaughtered animals by preparing plant fertilizers from it, adding it to dog or cat food or employing it in other commercial products.

Yet Christians know from the Bible that blood is not simply another biological product to be used in any way possible or profitable. The Bible shows that blood represents life. So God told mankind through Noah that humans should not eat blood. (Gen. 9:3, 4) Later, Jehovah God made this prohibition part of the Mosaic law. (Lev. 17:12; Deut. 12:23) After the Law was set aside, He instructed Christians that they must “abstain . . . from blood.” Accordingly, Jehovah’s Witnesses do not eat blood or accept blood transfusions. Nor do they endorse various commercial uses of blood.—Acts 15:19, 20, 28, 29.

We can better appreciate why this is the proper view if we consider this question: In ancient Israel, what was done with the blood of a slain animal?

God told the Israelites that blood could be used sacrificially on the altar. (Lev. 17:11) If it was not used in that way, an animal’s blood was to be poured out on the ground. This, in a sense, returned the blood to God for the earth is his footstool.—Lev. 17:13, 14; Isa. 66:1.

God’s limitation on the use of blood was further impressed on the Israelites by what he told them about fat. Contrary to what was required of true worshipers before and after the Mosaic law, Israelites during the time the Mosaic law was in force were not to eat fat. The fat of a sacrificial animal was viewed as its richest or best part, and so it could be burned on the altar as a sacrifice to God. (Lev. 3:3-5, 16) In this respect there was a similarity in how *those under the Law* viewed and used blood and fat. But there was also a difference. At least regarding an animal that died of itself or was killed by another beast, God’s law said that the fat could “be used *for anything else conceivable*, but you must not eat it at all.” Do you see the point? Though they could eat neither blood nor fat, Jehovah said that they could put fat to uses other than in sacrifice. *But God did not* say that about blood. If blood was not put on the altar, it was to be poured out on the ground, thus returning the animal’s life to the Life-Giver.—Lev. 7:22-27.

Christians are not under the Mosaic law. (Rom. 7:6; Col. 2:13-16) We are, though, specifically commanded to “abstain . . . from blood.” And we surely ought to respect the sacredness of blood, realizing that our salvation has been made possible through the blood of Christ. (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:13, 14, 20) A Christian who deeply appreciates this does not need endless rules about what he should do with regard to commercial uses of blood.

Consider, for instance, the use of blood as fertilizer. When an Israelite hunter poured an animal's blood out on the ground it was not in order to fertilize the soil. He was pouring it on the earth out of respect for blood's sacredness. So, would a Christian with a similar appreciation of the significance of blood deliberately collect it from slaughtered animals so that he could use it as fertilizer? Hardly, for such commercialization of blood would not be in accord with deep respect for the life-representing value of blood.

Of course, Christians cannot tell non-Christians that they must not use blood in making fertilizers or other commercial products. Hence, if most fertilizers on the market contained some blood, the Christian would have to decide for himself what to do. He could consider factors such as the Bible's counsel to "abstain . . . from blood," the availability of alternative products, the proddings of his Bible-trained conscience and the feelings of others.—Compare 1 Corinthians 8:10-13.

Another situation that sometimes arises involves feeding blood to animals. It is true that at present many animals in the wild do not live on vegetation as the Bible says they did originally. (Gen. 1:30) Rather, they eat other creatures, blood and all. Nonetheless, would a Christian who knows God's law on blood intentionally feed blood to animals under his care? Would that harmonize with what he knows about how blood was handled under the Law?

Finally, questions have arisen about disposing of animal carcasses that have blood in them. In Israel a person who found a carcass of an animal that died of itself could sell it to a foreigner who was not interested in keeping God's law. (Deut. 14:21) It is noteworthy, however, that this provision was not made so that an Israelite might make a regular business of trafficking in blood or unbled meat. Nor was the Israelite deliberately killing an animal and leaving the blood in it because some persons liked the taste of unbled meat or so that the carcass would weigh more. Rather, he was simply disposing of a carcass that he could not use for food and that had to be removed.

Accordingly, a farmer today might have to get rid of an unbled carcass, such as a cow that he found dead so that it was no longer possible to drain the blood. Or a hunter might find a dead animal in a trap. What could he do with such an unbled animal? Sell the carcass to a rendering plant? Sell the dead animal to a non-Christian who had some personal or commercial use for the flesh? The individual Christian would have to decide for himself after considering what the law of the land requires and factors such as those discussed above, including the value of having a good conscience before God and men.—Acts 24:16.

B) Deuteronomy 14:21 reads: "You must not eat any body already dead." Does that contradict Leviticus 11:40, which reads: "He who eats any of its dead body will wash his garments, and he must be unclean until the evening"?

"Questions From Readers," *The Watchtower*, July 1, 2005, p. 27.
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There is no contradiction between these two verses. The first text repeats the prohibition against eating an animal found dead, perhaps one that was killed by wild beasts. (Exodus 22:31; Leviticus 22:8) The second explains what an Israelite might have done if he violated that prohibition, possibly by accident.

The fact that something was prohibited by the Law did not mean that the prohibition would not at some time be ignored. For example, there were laws against stealing, murder, bearing false witness, and so forth. At the same time, there were penalties for breaking those divinely given laws. Such penalties gave force to the laws and showed how serious they were.

A person who transgressed the prohibition against eating the flesh of an animal found dead would be unclean in Jehovah's eyes and would have to undergo the proper procedure for cleansing. If he failed to cleanse himself properly, he would have to "answer for his error."—Leviticus 17:15, 16.

C) Might the Bible's prohibition about blood apply only to blood from a victim killed by man, not to unbled meat of an animal that died of itself or blood from a live animal or human?

"Questions From Readers," *The Watchtower*, May 15, 1983, pp. 30-1.
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Some persons have reasoned that way, pointing to a few Bible verses for seeming support. They have thus held that it would not be wrong to accept a transfusion of blood from a living donor. Such reasoning might sound valid, but close examination of the verses used and of other relevant texts indicates that God expects his people to avoid taking in blood and sustaining their life with blood, whether from a living or a dead creature.

The Israelites were told: "You must not eat any body already dead. To the alien resident who is inside your gates you may give it, and he must eat it; or there may be a selling of it to a foreigner, because you are a holy people to Jehovah your God." (Deuteronomy 14:21) Though it was unbled, they could sell the carcass to an alien resident. In *seeming* conflict, Leviticus 17:10 says: "As for any man of the house of Israel or some alien resident who is residing as an alien in their midst who eats any sort of blood, I shall certainly set my face against the soul that is eating the blood, and I shall indeed cut him off from among his people." Why the difference between these verses?

In presenting their view, some have asserted that Deuteronomy 14:21 permitted the alien to eat unbled meat if it was from an animal that was not killed by man, for then man did not have to give its blood (representing life) back to God. Leviticus 17:15 might seem to support this view; it says that the native or alien who ate a "body already dead or something torn by a wild beast" was simply to "wash . . . and be unclean until the evening." So it could appear that no substantial guilt came from eating blood if the victim was not killed by man. Thus some claim that it would not be wrong to take blood from a *living* creature, using it for food or for transfusions.

However, is the basic difference between Deuteronomy 14:21 and Leviticus 17:10, 15 a matter of how the animal died? The Scriptural answer must be, No.

The Israelites knew that they absolutely could not eat unbled meat from an animal that died of itself or was killed by a wild beast. While still at Mount Sinai they had been told to dispose of such carcasses. (Exodus 22:31) Deuteronomy 14:21 is in harmony, directing Israelites in the Promised Land to get rid of such unbled carcasses but allowing them to sell such to aliens.

Now let us carefully examine Leviticus 17:10. It says that no "man of the house of Israel or some alien resident" should eat blood. Was that because the animal had been killed by a human and so the blood had to be returned to God? To claim such is to read into the verse more than it says. Further, if guilt resulted only if blood was from a creature killed by man, then Deuteronomy 14:21 and Exodus 22:31 would not have forbidden *Israelites* to eat unbled flesh from animals that were not killed by men. Yet the Israelites clearly knew they could not eat such meat. Ezekiel stated: "My soul is not a defiled one; neither a body already dead nor a torn animal have I eaten from my youth up."—Ezekiel 4:14; compare 44:31.

Why, then, does Deuteronomy 14:21 say that the "alien resident" could be sold unbled meat, but Leviticus 17:10 forbids the "alien resident" to eat blood? Both God's people and Bible commentators have recognized that the distinction must have been the religious standing of the alien involved. *Aid to Bible Understanding*

(page (page 51)^{fnA} points out that sometimes the term “alien resident” meant a person among the Israelites who was not a full proselyte. It appears that this sort of person is meant at Deuteronomy 14:21, a man who was not trying to keep all of God's laws and who might have his own uses for a carcass considered unclean by Israelites and proselytes. Jewish scholars, too, have offered this explanation.^{fn1}

So, no worshiper of God could eat blood, whether from (or in the flesh of) an animal that had died of itself or from one that was killed by man. Why, then, does Leviticus 17:15 say that eating unbled flesh from such an animal that died of itself or was killed by a beast merely produced uncleanness?

We can find a clue at Leviticus 5:2, which says: “When a soul touches some unclean thing, whether the dead body of an unclean wild beast . . . , *although it has been hidden from him*, still he is unclean and has become guilty.” Yes, God acknowledged that an Israelite might err inadvertently. Hence, Leviticus 17:15 can be understood as providing for such an error. For example, if an Israelite ate meat served him and then learned that it was unbled, he was guilty of sin. But because it was inadvertent he could take steps to become clean. This, however, is noteworthy: If he would not take those steps, “he must then answer for his error.”—Leviticus 17:16.^{fn2}

Thus eating unbled flesh was not a trivial matter; it could even result in death. No true worshiper (Israelite or full proselyte alien) could voluntarily eat unbled flesh, no matter if it was from an animal that died of itself, was killed by another animal or was killed by a human. (Numbers 15:30) The apostolic council confirmed this. Writing to Christians making up the spiritual “Israel of God” it forbade eating that which was strangled, whether the unbled meat was from an animal that died from accidental strangulation or it was from one strangled by a man.—Galatians 6:16; Acts 21:25.

That council also directed God's servants to ‘abstain from blood.’ If those anointed Christians could not consume blood in meat from a strangled creature, they certainly could not take in blood from a living creature. It is not hard to see that neither the ancient Israelites nor obedient Christians would imitate the African tribesmen who shoot arrows into the jugular vein of live cattle to obtain blood that they mix with milk and drink. Similarly, God's servants could not accept the medical practice whereby units of human blood are withdrawn and given as transfusions intended to extend life. Such practices violate God's condemnation of anyone “who eats any sort of blood” and the command that Christians ‘abstain from blood.’—Acts 15:28, 29; Leviticus 17:10.

Despite pressures to water down God's requirements, true Christians know that life is a gift from Jehovah God and must be used as he directs. They obey God whether it seems physically practical now or not. For example, Acts 15:28, 29 commands Christians to abstain from idolatry. Thus a true worshiper threatened with death if he refused to share in idolatry would not argue that since “an idol is nothing,” he should not lose his present life over just a symbol. (1 Corinthians 8:4) The three faithful Hebrews set the proper example of obedience, as did the early Christians who accepted death in the arena rather than put incense on an altar.—Daniel 3:1-18.

Similarly, if a problem arose concerning blood, as when an accident or an operation causes extreme blood loss, the Christian cannot compromise his integrity. He obeys his Life-Giver with full assurance that if, despite the best alternative medical treatment, his present life should be lost, his eternal life is not endangered. Jesus told his followers: “Do not become fearful of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; but rather be in fear of him that can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna.”—Matthew 10:28.

Of course, recent medical evidence shows that blood transfusions usually are not essential to save a person, for experienced doctors testify that common alternatives can do as well in most cases. It might even be reasoned that the number of persons who could have been kept alive only by blood transfusion is probably smaller than that of those who have died from the damage of transfusions. Whatever is the case, Christians are determined to

obey God and respect his view of blood.

Consequently, true worshipers today will not eat unbled meat, whether from an animal that some man killed or from a creature that died in another way. Nor will they sustain their lives by taking in blood from living creatures, animal or human. They recognize Jehovah as their Life-Giver and are determined to obey him in all respects.

Footnotes

A. (Added by editor.) See corresponding point in *Insight on the Scriptures*, page 72 under “Alien Resident.” (Both references published by Jehovah’s Witnesses.)

1. As one example, *The Pentateuch and Haftorahs*, edited by Dr. J. Hertz, observes: “According to Lev. XVII, 15, touching or eating the flesh of a *nevelah* is defiling both to the Israelite and the ‘stranger [or alien resident].’ In Lev[iticus] the ‘stranger’ meant the non-Israelite who had become a proselyte in the full sense of the word, a *ger tzedek*. Here [in Deuteronomy 14:21] the ‘stranger that is within thy gates’ refers to the time when Israel would be settled in their Land and would have in their midst not only proselytes, but also men who while they had abandoned idolatry did not completely take upon themselves the life and religious practices of the Israelite. The Rabbis called this class of resident aliens *ger toshav*: and [Deuteronomy 14:21] refers to that class, who were neither Israelites by birth or conversion, nor ‘foreigners’.” In contrast, this work explains that the ‘stranger’ (alien) of Leviticus 17:15 was “a full proselyte, . . . otherwise, he was not debarred from eating it.”

2. We find an instructive parallel in another part of the Law involving blood: A man who unwittingly had sexual relations with his wife as she began to menstruate was unclean, but he could take steps to be forgiven. However, the Israelite who deliberately disregarded his wife’s menstrual blood was cut off.—Leviticus 15:19-24; 20:18.

D) How can we harmonize the Scriptural counsel, “Everything that is sold in a meat market keep eating, making no inquiry on account of your conscience” (1 Cor. 10:25), with the advice recently contained in *The Watchtower*, to make reasonable inquiry at places where one buys meat to be sure that it has been properly bled? (*The Watchtower*, September 15, 1961, page 557)

“Questions From Readers,” *The Watchtower*, November 1, 1961, pp. 669-70.
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Both of these statements of counsel must be viewed in their context. First Corinthians, chapter 10, contains a discussion concerning foods that have been offered to idols. It points out that Christians cannot “become sharers with the demons” by participating in religious ceremonies in which the worshiper shares a meal in common with some demon god. (1 Cor. 10:18-21) In fact, it would be wrong for the Christian to eat the meat anywhere if he ate it “as something sacrificed to an idol,” that is, with any feeling of reverence for the idol. (1 Cor. 8:7) So it was to protect Christians from idolatry that the command was given to “keep yourselves free from things sacrificed to idols.” (Acts 15:29) However, the offering of food to an idol does not bring about any change in the meat itself that would make it unfit for use. So if part of an animal that was offered in sacrifice were sold in a meat market it would be just as good as any other meat. Certainly a Christian would never ask for this meat in preference to other meat, feeling that it was “holy meat,” but, on the other hand, he was not under obligation to make inquiry to find out if the source of supply was a religious temple or a regular slaughterhouse. So the point under discussion in 1 Corinthians 10:25 was the purchasing of meat in a market that obtained some of its supplies from a religious temple.

Christians are also commanded to abstain “from blood and what is strangled.” (Acts 21:25) The Scriptures do indicate that one may eat meat but that he must not do it as an act of idolatry; however, nowhere does the Bible say that believers may eat blood under any circumstances. Furthermore, the prohibition on the consumption of blood is directed, not only to those who do their own slaughtering, but to all “the believers.” Therefore those

believers who do not do their own slaughtering may have to make inquiry to find an acceptable source of supply if they want to eat meat. If you know from your own experience or from inquiry that it is customary in your locality to drain the blood from butchered animals and from fowl killed for food, and you are doing business with a reliable person, then it may not be necessary to ask further specific questions on the matter when meat is purchased. However, one who purchases meat from worldly persons in those communities where Caesar's laws do not specify that blood must be drained from slaughtered animals would not be able to avoid eating "blood and what is strangled" without making inquiry.

So the points of counsel are harmonious and are in agreement with the rest of the Word of God.

E) Then are we to conclude that Jehovah's witnesses oppose the people's use of transfusions?

"Questions From Readers," *The Watchtower*, July 1, 1951, p. 416.
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That would be a wrong conclusion. Jehovah's witnesses do not oppose the people's use of transfusions, but allow each one the right to decide for himself what he can conscientiously do. The Israelites felt bound to abide by God's law forbidding the eating of meat with the blood congealed in it, but still they had no objection whatever to those outside God's organization doing it, and even supplied unbled carcasses to outsiders who regularly ate such things anyway. (Deut. 14:21) Each one decides for himself, and bears the responsibility for his course. Jehovah's witnesses consecrate their lives to God and feel bound by his Word, and with these things in view they individually decide their personal course and bear their personal responsibility therefor before God. So, as Joshua once said to the Israelites, "If it seem evil unto you to serve Jehovah, choose you this day whom ye will serve; . . . as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah."—Josh. 24:15, *AS*.

The same "Questions From Readers" on pages 414-6 included a number of other questions and answers included below, the question and answer above appearing lastly.

What are the Scriptural grounds for objecting to blood transfusions?

Jehovah made a covenant with Noah following the Flood, and included therein was this command: "Flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat." (Gen. 9:4) The Law given through Moses contained these restrictions: "Eat neither fat nor blood." "Eat no manner of blood." "Whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood; I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul. For it is the life of all flesh; the blood of it is for the life thereof: therefore I said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh." (Lev. 3:17; 7:26; 17:10, 11, 14; 19:26) And in the Greek Scriptures the instruction to Christians is: "The holy spirit and we ourselves have favored adding no further burden to you, except these necessary things, to keep yourselves free from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things killed without draining their blood and from fornication."—Acts 15:19, 20, 28, 29; 21:25, *NW*.

Do not these prohibitions about blood apply only to animal blood, and not to human blood?

Certainly Jehovah did not tell his people to drain human bodies of blood before eating them, since he was not authorizing cannibalism. Hence while animal blood was the primary consideration in the foregoing scriptures, do not overlook that the recorded prohibitions were against "any manner of blood", that they were to eat "no

manner of blood”, the “blood of no manner of flesh”. That embraces human flesh. The animal blood was for “an atonement for your souls”. Yet Paul showed that this blood of sacrificial animals made no real atonement, but only typified Jesus’ blood. If the typical animal blood was sacred, how much more so the antitypical human blood! To prove the prohibition included human blood, note what occurred when three men risked their lives to get water for the thirsty David: “But David would not drink of it, but poured it out to the LORD, and said, My God forbid it me, that I should do this thing: shall I drink the blood of these men that have put their lives in jeopardy? for with the jeopardy of their lives they brought it.” (1 Chron. 11:17-19) Because obtained at the risk of human life, David counted the water as human blood, and he applied to it the divine law regarding all blood, namely, pouring it out upon the ground. “Ye shall not eat the blood; ye shall pour it upon the earth as water.”—Deut. 12:16, 23, 24.

Since the blood donor does not die and no life is lost, why do the Scriptural prohibitions apply to transfusions?

We refer you back to the answer to the preceding question, and ask you, Did the three men who got the water for David die? No. Then did David consider this an extenuating circumstance that allowed him to drink the water he viewed as human blood? No. The death of the creature supplying the blood is immaterial. The prohibition was about taking blood into the system, and this simple fact cannot be altered by ingenious reasonings and subtle worldly wisdom.

Since Christians are not under the Law of Moses that emphasizes these restrictions on blood, why be bound by such ordinances?

The restrictions on blood existed before the Mosaic Law, being given centuries earlier, as recorded at Genesis 9:4. They were carried over for Christian observance, even after the Mosaic Law was ended by being nailed to Christ’s torture stake. The first answer in this group of questions and answers showed that this restriction on blood is basic for Christians, for when instructions on the bare minimum requirements were sent out this position on blood was included as one of “these necessary things”. So this principle regarding blood existed before and after the Mosaic Law, yet was so vital that it was also therein incorporated and emphasized.

Leviticus 3:17 states: “Eat neither fat nor blood.” So why shun blood while eating fat?

The Mosaic Law required that the fat of sacrificial animals be burned on the altar, as shown by the verses that precede the one quoted in the question. The fat was specially suitable for this, since it would burn readily. However, the point to be made here in answer to the question is that the prohibition regarding the fat is a feature of the Mosaic Law. Whereas blood is forbidden in places other than the Law covenant, fat is not; hence when the Law was abolished by its fulfillment the prohibition on fat ended, just as on eating pigs, rabbits, eels, etc.

Why do not Jehovah’s witnesses refuse to eat meat, inasmuch as some blood remains therein even though the animal has been properly bled?

Some say that it is the interstitial fluids and not blood that runs out of meat. Any blood remaining in the body would congeal after a time and after exposure to air, and so would not be fluid after purchase from a butcher shop. However, a reputable book on physiology presents reasonable argument to the effect that some congealed blood is left behind even in well-drained carcasses. In an endeavor to remove all blood strict Jews go to great extremes. Code of Jewish Law, a compilation of Jewish laws and customs by a rabbi and published by a Hebrew publishing company in New York city, details the great pains to be taken with meat. The meat is submerged in water for half an hour, is then salted and put in position for draining for an hour as the salt draws

out the blood, and is thereafter thoroughly washed three times. However, Jehovah's witnesses do not pursue such extremes, which seem typical of the Pharisaical zeal that fussed over trivialities and "disregarded the weightier matters of the Law". As Jesus said to them, "Blind guides, who strain out the gnat but gulp down the camel!" (Matt. 23:23, 24, *NW*) The point is this: Jehovah God gave the ordinance not to eat blood, when he said man could eat animal flesh. At that time he instructed that his requirement would be met by allowing the slaughtered animal's carcass to bleed, to drain. It is his law we are seeking to comply with in this matter of blood, and after we have followed his requirement to bleed the animal, and thus met his demands, is that not sufficient? We need not become absurd and quibble like a Pharisee, piling on burdens beyond the requirements of divine law.—Matt. 23:4.

Many say receiving a transfusion is not like eating blood. Is this view sound?

A patient in the hospital may be fed through the mouth, through the nose, or through the veins. When sugar solutions are given intravenously, it is called intravenous feeding. So the hospital's own terminology recognizes as feeding the process of putting nutrition into one's system via the veins. Hence the attendant administering the transfusion is feeding the patient blood through the veins, and the patient receiving it is eating it through his veins. After all the artful contrivings and reasonings and quibblings are over, the bald fact remains that a goodly quantity of one creature's blood has been deliberately taken into the system of another. That is what is forbidden by God, regardless of method.

If the transfusion does good, perhaps even saves a life, is it not a Christlike service rendered? Did not Jesus say, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends"?

Jesus said that, as recorded at John 15:13. He also added: "You are my friends if you do what I am commanding you." (John 15:14, *NW*) He shed his blood for those who obey him, not shedding it transfusion-style, but on the torture stake in sacrificial death, thereby presenting its life value on Jehovah's antitypical altar for the redemption of obedient mankind, as typified by the animal sacrifices under the Mosaic Law. Blood transfusion is not Christlike. His blood was of a certain type, and for transfusion purposes would benefit only certain individuals with compatible blood, and would be death-dealing for many others. Did not Christ die for all kinds of men, for any who proved their friendship for him by obeying his commands? Also, only Christ Jesus' blood has ransoming and sin-atoning merit, so imperfect humans need not try to put themselves into his exclusive place by arguing that they lay down their life for their friends, as Christ did for his. Moreover, the life opportunities opened by his shed blood are for eternal life in a new world, not for a short extension of the present temporary existence. Any saving of life accomplished by transfusions is short-lived.

And doing it in disobedience of God's commands could cost one eternal life. No temporary good done could justify this permanent great loss. The water brought to David when he was suffering physically from thirst would have done good to his body and would have brought welcome relief; but such good he considered no justification for violating the principle of Jehovah's law regarding blood. (1 Chron. 11:17-19) Similarly, on one occasion the Israelites were at the point of physical exhaustion and were famished, in sore need of food. They slaughtered animals and in their haste to meet their dire physical needs ate the flesh without taking time to let the blood drain out. The physical good this wrought for their systems did not justify their violation of God's law on blood, nor prevent their being rebuked as transgressors.—1 Sam. 14:31-34.

And let the transfusion enthusiasts with a savior-complex ponder the fact that on many occasions transfusions do harm, spread disease, and frequently cause deaths, which, of course, are not publicized. Now, are you as willing to take responsibility for bad results as you are to take credit for supposed good results? There is a possibility that your blood may cause a man to die. Remember, God's law permitted even the accidental slayer of a man to be executed by the victim's avenger, unless the slayer fled to and remained in specially provided

cities of refuge. (Num. 35:9-34) Christians are taught to be even more careful of human life than the natural Jews were. Again we say, no good comes of violating God's law, regardless of the array of worldly wisdom brought forward to justify it before men.—Luke 16:15; 1 Cor. 3:19.