

ACTS 21:25 ABSTAIN FROM EATING BLOOD

"Heart of the torah", "Letter to the Gentiles" (Lev. 17:10-14, Acts 15:19-21)

In the Book of Acts we see a verse that has caused much confusion among the saints in regard to what was/is required of Gentiles. This verse is referring to what was called "The Heart Of The Torah". This letter is also called "The Letter To The Gentiles" (Lev.17-18) where the proper way to slaughter animals and the respect of the life in the blood is explained. In those days the things listed were common among the gentiles. The torah is symbolically divided into three parts, the heart, belly and pelvic area. The head part (where your ego and pride exist), is of course the most important. No part of your body can be doing something contradictory to what your head tells you to do. The heart of the torah has to do with the upper part of your body. The upper part is where your heart is. What you observe and honor comes from your heart. This includes the stomach area in regards to what you eat. The pelvic area represents your sexual activity. For most people their head says they want to follow Yah, but their body and flesh (the other two parts), lusts after other things.



Many people say that this verse means that all the Gentiles have to do after they accept Yeshua into their heart is: *"abstain from meat sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is **strangled** and from fornication.* It seems very strange, but many honestly use this verse to do away with the rest of the torah. Truly this is a sad belief that I will immediately dispel once and for all. **Acts 21:25** *"But concerning the Gentiles who have believed, we wrote, having decided that **they should abstain from meat sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from fornication.**"* If you back into Leviticus you will see where these three themes came from. These are thematic connections.

Let's have a look at what is being spoken of in Leviticus.

Lev. 17:1-9 *Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to Aaron and to his sons and to all the sons of Israel and say to them, 'This is what the LORD has commanded, saying, 3 "**Any man from the house of Israel who slaughters an ox or a lamb or a goat in the camp, or who slaughters it outside the camp, 4 and has not brought it to the doorway of the tent of meeting to present it as an offering to the LORD before the tabernacle of the LORD, bloodguiltiness is to be reckoned to that man. He has shed blood and that man shall be cut off from among his people.** 5 "The reason is so that the sons of Israel may bring their sacrifices which they were sacrificing in the open field, that they may bring them in to the LORD, at the doorway of the tent of meeting to the priest, and sacrifice them as sacrifices of peace offerings to the LORD. 6 "The priest shall sprinkle the blood on the altar of the LORD at the doorway of the tent of meeting, and offer up the fat in smoke as a soothing aroma to the LORD. 7 "They shall no longer sacrifice their sacrifices to the goat demons with which they play the harlot. This shall be a permanent statute to them throughout their generations." 8 "Then you shall say to them, '**Any man from the house of Israel, or from the aliens who sojourn among them, who offers a burnt offering or sacrifice, 9 and does not bring it to the doorway of the tent of meeting to offer it to the LORD, that man also shall be cut off from his people.**"* This entire passage is explaining how to participate in "proper sacrificial worship".

Now let's go a little farther into Leviticus and see what is talked about. **Lev. 17:10-16** *'And any man from the house of Israel, or from the aliens who sojourn among them, who eats any blood, **bl** will set My face against that person who eats blood and will cut him off from among his people. 11 'For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for **bit** is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement.' 12 "Therefore I said to the sons of Israel, '**No person among you may eat blood, nor may any alien who sojourns among you eat blood.**' 13 "So when any man from the sons of Israel, or from the aliens who sojourn among them, in hunting catches a beast or a bird which may be eaten, **he shall pour out its blood and cover it with earth.** 14 "For as for the life of all flesh, its blood is*

identified with its life. Therefore I said to the sons of Israel, 'You are not to eat the blood of any flesh, for the life of all flesh is its blood; **whoever eats it shall be cut off.**' 15 "When any person eats an animal which dies or is torn by beasts, whether he is a native or an alien, he shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and remain unclean until evening; then he will become clean. 16 "But if he does not wash them or bathe his body, then he shall bear his guilt." This passage is clearly revealing to the people that to be considered kosher (clean) meat the blood of a clean animal must be evacuated properly. In other words when you prepare a clean animal to eat or to sacrifice, the blood of that animal must be drained onto the ground. Back then, and still to this day in many parts of the world, sheep and goats were/are killed by hanging them (strangling them), from a tree. This is a very cruel and improper way of killing an animal. When doing so the blood (life) is not allowed to exit the body properly and death is not instant as it should be. You are not to eat meat that has not been slaughtered properly. This is summed up as "abstaining from blood".

When we look at what is spoken of in Lev. 18:1-30 we will understand it is all about "laws concerning sexual immorality". The three things listed in Acts 21:25 are simply instructions contained in the torah in regard to **abstaining from meat sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from fornication.**

That verse in Acts is simply a summary of Lev. 17-18, rules about kosher animals.

What does it mean to eat blood?

It means that the blood of an animal must be properly vacated. If it is not properly bled, you are eating blood. This verse is not literally talking about drinking blood.

What does the torah mean by the phrase "catches any animal or bird that may be eaten" mean?

Has the scripture given any instructions on which animals "may be eaten"?

Are there any animals that "may not be eaten"?

To whom does this commandment apply"?

The answer is right in front of us. It says it is for the Israelites and the non Israelites who have joined them. In other words, it's talking about the same thing talked about in Acts 21:25 where it says "**the Gentiles who have believed**". There is one law for the Israelites and those who join them in their belief in Yahveh, the Holy One of Israel.

Note that the scripture assumes we are talking about kosher meat. This is a given, although it clarifies this in verse thirteen. "**Eating blood**" is an idiom for eating kosher meat that hasn't had the blood properly removed" (Lev. 17:10-16) . Therefore, the torah teaches that eating blood means to eat clean meat from which the blood hasn't been properly vacated. Keep in mind the Jewish sages call Leviticus 17 and 18 the heart of the torah. Acts is talking about the "heart of the torah". **Heart of the torah is an idiom** for Lev 17-18. **1Cor. 10:18-20** Look at the nation alsrael; are not those who beat the sacrifices sharers in the altar? 19 What do I mean then? **That a thing sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? 20 No, but I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God; and I do not want you to become sharers in demons.**" Put simply, all these verses are saying the way you sacrifice tells us who you are worshipping.

Now let's look at the last word of that verse; "fornication". Fornication is NOT what is commonly taught in the churches. In most churches fornication is taught as being sex without marriage. This is nonsense.

Fornication: very briefly; every form of it was sternly condemned by the Mosaic law (Lev. 21:9; 19:29; Deut. 22:20, 21, 23-29; 23:18; Ex. 22:16). (See ADULTERY.) But this word is more frequently used in a symbolical way rather than in its ordinary sense. It frequently means a forsaking of God or a following after idols (Isa. 1:2; Jer. 2:20; Ezek. 16; Hos. 1:2; 2:1-5; Jer. 3:8, 9). Fornication is referring to those who are open adulterers, sexual perverts, homosexuals, idolaters, lesbians, child molesters, etc.

What it is saying in verse 25 can be expressed like this: "if your going to come into this fellowship or around born again people (children, families, etc) you will not be any of the above. You must behave according to the standards laid out in scripture." Those things listed are like a malignant cancer, they can and do contaminate everything around them and that is not allowed with people who pursue torah. There must be a minimum standard in order to be part of the fellowship, camaraderie. There are three things (essentials) the scriptures tell us that apply when you bring new brethren in to learn torah and have fellowship.

- 1) no idols
- 2) no sexual perverse person
- 3) keep kosher

If one cannot do those three things then you are not to come into fellowship with us to learn torah. If you can't deal with those three basic instructions now, then how can you deal with even more instructions required when pursuing torah? that in oder for the gentiles to be in fellowship with the torah pursuant believers they would have to first cease from three things.