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of Moses must not be imposed upon gentiles who were being saved. Nonetheless, some practices retained by Jewish Christians were still relevant even in the New Testament, so James concluded, *“We should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood. For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city”* (Acts 15:19-21).

Although the controversy they were considering had arisen in Antioch (Acts 14:26-15:1), the conference addressed a letter *“to the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia”* (Acts 15:23). Syria is the country in which the city of Antioch was located and Cilicia was the country adjacent. The main point of the letter was this: *“It seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well”* (28-29). Thus, it is clear the decision was not merely a locally applicable one, but relevant to all gentiles. This is especially evident as Paul is observed disseminating these instructions beyond those locales mentioned in the letter. After *“he went through Syria and Cilicia”* (41), the apostle and his companions visited Derbe, Lystra, and Iconium (Acts 16:1-2), *“and as they went through the cities, they delivered to them the decrees to keep, which were determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem”* (3). These rules are universal.

There are three primary concerns and one secondary. The primary are: sexual immorality (1st Corinthians 6:18-20), eating food sacrificed to idols (1st Corinthians 8:1-13; 10:24-33), and eating blood. Eating things strangled is a sub-category of eating blood. Some forms of eating blood are very straightforward as in blood sausage, also known as black pudding, but it might be consumed less conspicuously when the blood of the animal has not been drained by slitting its throat, which the Old Testament emphatically required: *“You shall not eat the blood; you shall pour it on the earth like water”* (Deuteronomy 12:16, 24; 15:23). Because strangulation does not allow for proper blood drainage, eating animals killed that way is a form of eating blood.

While it is true that Jesus preached, *“Whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him, because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, thus purifying all foods”* (Mark 7:18-19),

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the fact is that blood is not food. It never has been. In the beginning, God told Adam, *“I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food”* (Genesis 1:29). No meat of any kind was authorized at first; mankind subsisted on a vegetarian diet, which implicitly excluded blood. Much later, following the worldwide flood, the Lord said to Noah, *“Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs. But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood”* (Genesis 9:3-4). When meat was introduced to the human diet, there were no limits on which animals could be eaten; the only restriction was that blood was forbidden. Centuries later, when Jehovah established a law for Israel, many, many animals were disallowed (Leviticus 11), and the rule against consuming blood was repeated multiple times (Leviticus 3:17; 7:26-27; 17:12-14; 19:26; Deuteronomy 12:16, 23-24; 15:23). That blood consumption is prohibited in the present covenant is no surprise (Acts 15:20; 15:29; 21:25), for thus it has always been.

Blood has never been allowed by God as food for any people anywhere at any time for one simple reason: *“the life of the flesh is in the blood”* (Leviticus 17:11) *“Pour out its blood and cover it with dust; for it is the life of all flesh. Its blood sustains its life. Therefore I said to the children of Israel, ‘You shall not eat the blood of any flesh, for the life of all flesh is its blood’”* (13-14).

The foregoing reason being clear, every animal we kill at home with the intention of eating, either for ourselves or for sale, is properly drained of its blood.

Before moving here, we sold eggs more frequently and one of our regular customers, being Filipino, made a special request, more than once, so that he could have balut. Balut is a delicacy in the Philippines, made by boiling or steaming an unhatched duck embryo. Because the egg has been both fertilized and incubated, the embryo contains blood. Therefore, it must not be eaten without being drained. Conscience compelled us to decline this request.

In the New Testament, God has indeed cleansed *“all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air”* and expects Christians to *“kill and eat”* (Acts 15:9-16). *“For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer”* (1st Timothy 4:4-5). Nevertheless, blood is not meant for food, nor has it ever been.

***"WHAT MUST I DO
TO BE SAVED?"***

ACTS 16:30

LEARN THE GOSPEL

John 6:45; Romans 10:17

BELIEVE IN CHRIST

Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16

CONFESS CHRIST

Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 3:19; 17:30

BE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST

Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-6

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

***"THE ASSEMBLING OF
OURSELVES TOGETHER"***

HEBREWS 10:24-25

SUNDAY

Worship @ 10:00 a.m.

Studies @ 11:45 a.m.

WEDNESDAY

Studies & Worship @ 7:00 p.m.

75 Sherrod Boulevard
Belén, New Mexico

Seekers Welcome.
Members Expected.

***"IF A MAN IS OVERTAKEN IN
ANY TRESPASS...
RESTORE SUCH A ONE"***

GALATIANS 6:1

CONFESS TRESPASSES

James 5:16; 1st John 1:9

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 8:22

PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS

Acts 8:22

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

"A WORD FITLY SPOKEN"

PROVERBS 25:11

"Pride is concerned with who is right. Humility is concerned with what is right."

– Ezra Taft Benson

GIVE ME THE BIBLE

KDNF 840AM

Sunday @ 9:00 a.m.

"WHOLE COUNSEL"

ACTS 20:27

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"THINGS STRANGLLED"

Bryan Matthew Dockens

My family is in the midst of our seventh year raising turkeys which we sell for the holidays. Tomorrow morning, if the Lord wills, we intend to rise early, don our overalls, slaughter 19 birds, butcher them, pluck them, bag them, and weigh them before delivering to our Thanksgiving buyers' homes and businesses across two counties the following days. Six more birds will be held in reserve for a month to repeat this process for our Christmas buyers. This will be the second year we are joined by children on an eye-opening field trip; last year, we were accompanied by 14 children and 4 parents from a 4H club in Belén, and tomorrow we are expecting to meet some Socorro County homeschoolers at our place to teach them about processing poultry.

Whenever we have opportunity to impart some knowledge about processing livestock for human consumption, especially poultry, we take care to explain that the reason we kill the way we do is biblical.

When it comes to chickens and other small birds, wringing the neck is an old-school method common to many farmers, but one we decline to use on Scriptural grounds. Thrice in the New Testament, it is written *"to abstain from... things strangled, and from blood"* (Acts 15:20; cf. 15:29; 21:25).

The elders of the church in Jerusalem and the apostles of Christ were gathered to settle the question of circumcision and concluded the Law

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