

Universal Laws: Eating Blood

A third universal law we can identify has to do with blood. In the scriptures blood represents life, physically and spiritually. The symbolism involved is present from the beginning of the scriptures to the end and the loss of life is sometimes called bloodshed, or shedding of blood. We understand the significance of blood in our lives today, but in many respects it's sacred aspects have been neutralized. Medically we understand that blood loss is dangerous and can lead to death while the quality of our blood determines our overall state of health. An aversion to blood is a common trait that many people share while others look forward to gory scenes in movies. Some believe that blood possesses power in a mystical sense. The scriptures reveal God's attitude toward blood and how it's to be respected.

Noah and his family found a new world waiting for them as they left the safety of the ark at the end of the great flood. Things had changed to the extent that it no longer resembled the place they were accustomed to. Peter refers to this difference in his second epistle and described what had been as ***“the world that then was”*** (2 Pet 3.6). This world perished in the flood, and as the family sets out to reestablish life, God incorporates a number of changes.

One of those was the change of man's diet by adding living things. ***“Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.”*** (Gen 9.3). In the next verse God places a limitation on what they can eat stating, ***“But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat.”*** (Gen 9.4). The ordinance against consuming blood was given to the family of Noah from which all humanity has descended and would be preserved in the culture of all humans worldwide.

The significance of blood continues in the following verses as God pronounces consequences for taking life. concerning murder the Lord states, ***“And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man.”*** (Gen 9.5). The sacredness of life is depicted in terms that combine life and blood. The loss of life is therefore the loss of blood, or bloodshed. Blood becomes a powerful symbol of life, physically and spiritually, that continues throughout the biblical narrative. Consequences for murder are stated in terms that refer to the ***“blood of your lives...”*** that will be required if a life is taken (Gen 9.6).

Man was created in the image of God. Blood is a vital element sustaining life and representing spiritual realities. Blood was the instrument of salvation that preserved the firstborn of the children of Israel (Ex 12.1-28). Sacrifices commanded in the law given to Moses focused on blood and how it was to be handled as described in the Law. The animals from which the blood was taken represented Christ as God's sacrifice for the sins of the world. Priests were consecrated using blood which ***“hallowed”*** or made them holy (Ex 29).

Blood has no inherent mystical properties. It's significance comes from that fact it was ordained and sanctified by God in the physical creation and it's connection to spiritual purification. Blood is the bridge between life and death, salvation and eternal loss and cleansing or corruption in the sight of God. The power of blood and it's effect exists in the mind of God who recognizes those who comply with his directives.

As I mentioned earlier, there are those who ascribe power to blood itself. Some in the past have thought that consuming the blood of animals or even humans would endow them with strength or other abilities. Although blood has a critical role in life, there isn't any power in it. The power and strength of the representation lies in the sanctification of God and the symbolic representations put in place by the Lord.

Blood as a figurative element can be followed through the scriptures. From its sanctification, representation of the loss of life and its usage in the sacrifices, the crimson trail leads to the cross where Christ gave his blood, representative of his life, for the sins of the world. Through that sacrifice we all have the ability to know the Lord and reach the eternal home Satan seeks to deprive us of. Blood is the element that solidifies our link to God and needs to be respected as holy.

To some it's inconceivable that a God no one in the modern world has seen or heard would issue mandates to a few in a very remote time that are to be honored now. Academia regards the Bible as another mythic system and are very quick to point out that identical ideas appear in older writings from other cultures. Similarities with world myths and practices are only that, similarities. The reason why these exist is due to the fact that one family, made up of eight people, repopulated the world after the great flood. The knowledge of this event and practices such as offering blood sacrifices were known to all of them. It's not surprising then that these ideas are present in world civilizations because of this shared ancestry.

The Hebrew Bible isn't the oldest of these documents but it's the only one that is divinely inspired and preserved by a nation selected by God based on the faith of Abraham their progenitor. Using older stories and beliefs doesn't discredit the Bible, it proves that the idea of sacrifice, blood, marriage and the wrongfulness of murder are common things that began with a single family who preserved these directives.

We can understand why there are differences as the apostle Paul points out that people didn't like to "*retain*" God in the minds and so the Lord left them to their own devices (**Rom 1.28**). Today we're called upon to remember, respect and honor things that God has sanctified. Blood is one of those and the prohibitions against shedding blood or eating it are in place now just as they were then.