

Deuteronomy 12:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Only ye shall not eat the blood; ye shall pour it upon the earth as water.

Analysis

The blood prohibition: 'Only ye shall not eat the blood; ye shall pour it upon the earth as water.' This reiterates Levitical law (Leviticus 17:10-14). Blood represents life (nephesh, נֶפֶשׁ) and belongs to God. Pouring blood on ground shows respect for life and acknowledges God as life-giver. The comparison 'as water' indicates complete drainage—blood must not be consumed. This command persists even in decentralized slaughter, maintaining theological principle: life is sacred, blood must be offered (poured out) to God. New Testament Jerusalem council maintained this prohibition (Acts 15:20, 29), though debated whether ritual or moral.

Historical Context

Blood prohibition predates Mosaic law (Genesis 9:4). Ancient Near Eastern cultures had varying blood practices; some consumed blood in ritual. Israel's prohibition distinguished them and taught life's sanctity. Pagan sacrifice often involved drinking blood to commune with gods. Yahweh's prohibition emphasized His transcendence—humans don't 'consume' divine life but receive it as gift. Christ's blood shed and 'drink' (John 6:53-56) paradoxically fulfills and supersedes this, as His blood brings life rather than taking it.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

- ## Interlinear Text

Additional Cross-References

2