

Deuteronomy 14:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But these are they of which ye shall not eat: the eagle, and the ossifrage, and the ospray,

Analysis

But these are they of which ye shall not eat—The negative catalogue begins with birds of prey: **the eagle** (נֶשֶׁךְ, nesher, possibly vulture), **ossifrage** (פֶּרֶס, peres, bearded vulture), and **ospray** (עֲזַנְיָה, ozniyah, black vulture). These carrion-eaters symbolized death and decay, unfit for a people called to life and holiness.

The prohibition's principle extends beyond hygiene to theology: Israel must not internalize death. Just as scavengers feed on corruption, sin feeds on spiritual death. Paul echoes this: **Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness** (Ephesians 5:11). The clean/unclean taxonomy trained Israel to see creation through God's moral categories, not merely biological ones.

Historical Context

Raptors were associated with Canaanite divination practices (augury—reading omens from bird flight). By forbidding their consumption, God distanced Israel from pagan omen-reading and declared such birds ritually impure, reinforcing monotheistic worship.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What modern 'carrion' (toxic relationships, media, habits) feeds on your spiritual death rather than life?
2. How does categorizing creation morally (not just scientifically) shape a biblical worldview?
3. Why does holiness require not just avoiding evil but refusing even proximity to death and corruption?

Interlinear Text

ה	וְ	ר	אֲשֶׁר	לֹא	תֹאכְלֶנּוּ	מִן	הַנֶּשֶׁר
H2088		H834		H3808	H398	H1992	H5404
But these are they of which ye shall not eat					the eagle		
וְהָרֶסֶס		וְהָעֹשְׂפָה:					
H6538		H5822					
and the ossifrage		and the ospray					

From KJV Study • kjevstudy.org