

Deuteronomy 15:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Only thou shalt not eat the blood thereof; thou shalt pour it upon the ground as water.

Analysis

Only thou shalt not eat the blood thereof; thou shalt pour it upon the ground as water—Even in common meals, blood remains sacred: **The life of the flesh is in the blood** (Leviticus 17:11). The prohibition to **pour it upon the ground** returns life symbolically to God—acknowledging Him as life's source and owner. This ordinance applied to all meat consumption, not only sacrifice, making every meal a theological act.

Hebrews explains the ultimate significance: **Without shedding of blood is no remission** (Hebrews 9:22). Christ's blood, shed and **poured out for many for the remission of sins** (Matthew 26:28), accomplished what animal blood foreshadowed. The Lord's Supper reverses the command—we **drink** Christ's blood (symbolically, John 6:53-56), internalizing the New Covenant's atoning power. Blood poured out in the Old Covenant becomes blood taken in under the New.

Historical Context

Blood prohibition distinguished Israel from pagan cultures that consumed blood in ritual meals, believing it transferred the animal's strength or connected them to deities. God's command elevated blood's sanctity—life belongs to God alone, not human consumption or manipulation.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does the Old Covenant's prohibition on drinking blood (pour it out) contrast with Christ's command to drink His blood (internalize it)?
2. What does 'pouring blood like water' (returning life to God) teach about stewardship—you use resources but acknowledge God's ultimate ownership?
3. In what ways does every meal remain a 'theological act' where you acknowledge God as life's source?

Interlinear Text

קַ	אֶת	דָּמְךָ	לֹא	תֹאכֶל	עַל	הָאָרֶץ
H7535	H853	the blood	H3808	Only thou shalt not eat	H5921	it upon the ground
		H1818		H398		H776
	וְשָׁפָךְ	נָוֹ	כַּמַּיִם:			
	thereof thou shalt pour	as water				
	H8210	H4325				

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 12:16 (Blood): Only ye shall not eat the blood; ye shall pour it upon the earth as water.

Deuteronomy 12:23 (Blood): Only be sure that thou eat not the blood: for the blood is the life; and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh.

Leviticus 7:26 (Blood): Moreover ye shall eat no manner of blood, whether it be of fowl or of beast, in any of your dwellings.

