

BLOOD TRANSFUSIONS

DOES A BLOOD TRANSFUSION VIOLATE THE SANCTITY OF LIFE—YES OR NO?

No, a blood transfusion does not violate the commandment God gave to honor the sanctity of life. Read on and you will understand why!

For many years (since 1927) Watchtower (WT) followers have been told that taking a blood transfusion is a violation of God's commandment concerning the sanctity of life, which was first mentioned in Genesis Chapter 9, then in the Law of Moses, and last in the New Testament book of Acts. Let's examine the facts to see if the WT prohibition has any real Biblical merit.

The first thing a Jehovah's Witness should ask himself is this: If Jehovah was inspecting (from 1914 – 1918) slaves who were feeding the domestics, how could He choose a group of professing Christians (Watchtower leaders) who believed in taking blood transfusions?

The second thing one would ask himself may be this: Why is the Watchtower the only religious body that believes the Bible forbids blood transfusions? Then one may also ponder this question: Aren't the rest of Bible believers (Jews, Muslims, and Christians) concerned about the sanctity-of-life commandment?

To probe a bit further, let's look at the first mention of this commandment in Genesis:

Gen 9:3-4 Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things. 4 But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat.

Lev 17:11 For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.

Though the eating of animal food was granted, consuming the blood was most solemnly forbidden because the blood was the life of the beast and this life was to be offered to God as a covering for sin. Hence, the blood was ever held sacred because it was the grand instrument of atonement and because it represented the Blood of Christ by which the children of God are cleansed from all their sin.

Was there ever a time when this commandment came under question? Yes. When? Think about how strange these words sounded when Christ spoke them to the crowd that was following Him:

John 6:53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. 54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. 56 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

What was the response to this drastic change? It was repulsive, and it offended even His disciples:

John 6:60-61 Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? 61 When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you?

Could it be possible, now that the “fullness of time was come,” that the eating of the sacrifice and the drinking of its blood was a new commandment made by the Antitype (the one who the type represents, in this case Christ) Himself? Yes, it was now the requirement for one who would have eternal life. How exactly does one eat and drink the body and blood of Christ? It is surely not by joining any religious organization or denomination, nor by following religious rituals, nor by living a “good” life. No, a thousand times no! One must be born-again to enter the Kingdom of God according to John 3:3.

So back to our question—is a blood transfusion a violation of any past or present commandment of God? The answer is still no. Please tell me how that can be true! Well, the answer was there all the time; how could you have missed it? The reason a blood transfusion is not a violation of any sanctity-of-life commandment given by God has to do with the dead and the living. What do you mean by that? Well, think for a moment! If an animal died and you drank its blood, it would show that you had no respect for its life because the life of all living beings is in their blood. It would be as if one would urinate on a dead person’s body to show contempt for his life. It was the blood of the DEAD that was spoken of in each of God’s commandments.

A blood transfusion is not taken from the DEAD (blood becomes septic moments after a person dies), but from the living. This in itself shows respect for life (to keep someone alive) and the sanctity of life and in no way violates any of God’s commandments in symbol or reality, but to the contrary, it honors them in the giving of one’s very life (his blood) himself to help save another’s life.

Now for the last point of interest, let’s look at Acts Chapter 15 and get from the context the sense of what is being emphasized here:

Acts 15:28-29 For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; 29 That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.

Now if Christ “is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth” and He has fulfilled all the types and shadows of the Old Testament, and He has, then what is the purpose of “these necessary things” mentioned in the above verses? Well, let’s start with fornication, for it’s the most obvious. Fornication is a sin; therefore, one is to abstain from it. Now let’s take a closer look at the other three and see if they fall into a different category altogether.

Was eating things that were strangled a sin? No, it was unhealthy. Was eating meat that was offered to an idol a sin? No, it was unhealthy. Was the eating of blood to a gentile with no understanding of typology a sin? No, it was unhealthy, for blood becomes septic moments after death.

Whether one agrees or disagrees on the eating of blood in Acts 15 for health reasons makes no difference because it is the blood of the dead and not the blood of the living that is being discussed in this reference. A blood transfusion is taken from the blood of the living and in symbol and reality honors the sanctity-of-life principles as given by our Creator; therefore, it is a sin to prohibit a blood transfusion for anyone who intended to receive it to preserve a life.

Lev 3:17 It shall be a perpetual statute for your generations throughout all your dwellings, that ye eat neither fat nor blood.

If what the WT says about the blood and blood transfusions were true, then they would have also needed to have a band on eating animal fat. Jews eat meat with fat and think nothing of it. This proof alone shows that WT has missed the point altogether.

May God help you to see that what the Watchtower is telling its followers is the exact opposite of what our Creator has taught us about the sanctity of life. Prohibiting a person from saving his life or from helping to save someone else’s life must be a grievous sin against the will of God, for Jesus said this:

John 15:13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.