

THE ABSTENTIONS OF THE GENTILES

Numbers 6:24-26 "The Lord bless you and keep you! May the LORD make his face shine upon you, and be gracious to you! May the Lord turn his face upon you and give you peace!"

In the time of the apostles, the converted Jews did not completely abandon their traditions handed down by their fathers and some concepts of the law of Moses such as circumcision, salvation by works of the law, purification, etc., raising questions among the Gentile converts. There were therefore many contrasts and the apostles had to intervene together with the council of elders to clarify and establish what could still be applied of the law of Moses and what was excluded because it was fulfilled by the sacrifice of Christ. (Acts 15:1,5-11) The decision of the apostles and the council of elders, guided by the Holy Spirit for Gentile converts, was to give them only a few prescriptions:

Acts 15:19-20,24,28-29 (James said) ... I think that foreigners who convert to God should not be disturbed; but that they should be written to abstain from defiled things in sacrifices to idols, from fornication, from strangled animals, and from blood. And they gave them this letter: The brothers apostles and elders, to the brothers of Antioch, Syria and Cilicia who come from paganism, greetings. We have heard that some of us, who left without any mandate from us, have disturbed you with their speeches, upsetting your souls. For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to impose any other burden on you than these things, which are necessary: to abstain from meat sacrificed to idols, from blood, from strangled animals, and from fornication; from these things you will do well to guard yourselves. Stay healthy.

Ac 21:25 "As for the Gentiles who believed, we wrote decreeing that they abstain from things sacrificed to idols, from blood, from strangled

animals, and from fornication.

These four precepts had already been established by God for the people of Israel to keep the people away from idolatry, that is, from worship of gods, demons, the stars of heaven, powerful men, animals, objects, etc. (Deut 17:2-7) But why did the apostles confirm only these precepts? Because the sacrificed flesh, the blood, the blood of suffocated animals and both sexual and spiritual fornication, open the door to the occult where pacts and spiritual bonds take over with the spirits of evil that lead the believer astray to distance him from God.

The Foods God Created

One may eat all foods or drink except those offered as worship to the creature, the spirits of the dead, and demons or gods.

Mk 7:18-23 He (Jesus) said to them, 'Are you not able to understand either? Do you not understand that everything that enters man from outside cannot defile him, because it does not enter his heart but his belly and goes into the latrine?' So saying, he declared all foods pure. He also said: "It is what comes out of man that defiles man; for it is from within, from the hearts of men, that come evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, covetousness, wickedness, fraud, lasciviousness, an evil look, slander, pride, foolishness. All these bad things come out from within and defile man.

1 Tim 4:4-5 ... all that God has created is good; and nothing is to be rejected, if used with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and by prayer.

Mk 16:17-18 (Jesus said) These are the signs that will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will take serpents in their hands; even if they drink some

poison, they will have no harm from it; they will lay hands on the sick and they will be healed.

Meat sacrificed to idols

Ex 34:15-16 (God said to the people of Israel) Take care not to make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, otherwise, when they prostitute themselves to their gods and offer sacrifices to their gods, it may come to pass that they invite you and you eat of their sacrifices, take their daughters for your sons, and their daughters prostitute themselves to their gods and cause your sons to prostitute themselves to their gods.

Apostle Paul's Message to the Believers in Corinth:

1 Corinthians 10:14,16,18-20-21,25-33 Beloved, flee from idolatry. Is not the cup of blessing which we bless communion with the blood of Christ? Is not the bread that we break communion with the body of Christ? Look at Israel according to the flesh: do not those who eat the sacrifices have fellowship with the altar? What am I saying? That the meat sacrificed to idols is something? That an idol is something? Far from it; I say that the flesh that the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God; now I do not want you to have communion with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. Eat of everything that is sold in the market, without making inquiries for reasons of conscience; for the earth belongs to the Lord and all that it contains. If any of the unbelievers invites you, and you want to go, eat everything that is set before you, without making inquiries for reasons of conscience. But if anyone says to you, "This is the flesh of sacrifices," do not eat of it out of consideration for him who warned you, and for the conscience of the conscience, I say, not yours, but that other's; for why should my freedom be judged by the conscience of others? If I eat of something with thanksgiving, why should I be blamed for what I give thanks? So whether you eat, drink, or do

anything else, do everything for the glory of God. Do not give cause for scandal either to the Jews, or to the Greeks, or to the church of God; just as I also please all in all things, seeking not my own profit but that of the many, that they may be saved.

Here the apostle Paul indicates the case not of a simple meal given by non-believers that with prayer and thanksgiving to God could be sanctified, but indicates a meal dedicated as worship to demons, (today one's own god, the dead saints, the Madonna, the patronal feasts, etc.) and therefore the apostle Paul says not to eat it so as not to cause scandal to the conscience of the non-believer who recognizes the believer as a servant of God. In practice, if after being warned, or the believer has discernment or revelation about it, and eats of that sacrificial food, he would not only sin, but would give the unbeliever a bad example of tolerance toward the sin of idolatry or spiritual fornication and a bad witness as a servant of God, denying the opportunity of salvation to the unbeliever.

1 Corinthians 8:7-13 ... Some, hitherto accustomed to the idol, eat of that flesh as if it were something sacrificed to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled by it. Now it is not a food that will make us pleasing to God; if we do not eat, we have nothing less; and if we eat we have nothing more. But take care that this right of yours does not become a stumbling block for the weak. Why is it that if anyone sees you, who have knowledge, sitting at table in a temple dedicated to idols, will not his conscience, if he is weak, be tempted to eat meat sacrificed to idols? Thus, by your knowledge, the weak is harmed, the brother for whom Christ died. Now, by sinning against your brothers in this way, by wounding their conscience which is weak, you are sinning against Christ. Therefore, if a food scandalizes my brother, I will never eat meat again, so as not to scandalize my brother.

Another case in which the apostle Paul explains that if a brother who is

still weak in faith sees another more mature one who eats food as if it were meat sacrificed to idols just because he is at the table in a temple of idols, he would feel free to eat the sacrificed meat by falling into sin; then he exhorts the mature brother not to scandalize the weaker brother so as not to fall both into sin.

Blood

Ge 9:3-4 (God said to Noah) Everything that moves and has life will serve you as food; I give you all this, like green grass; but you will not eat flesh with its life, that is, with its blood.

Lev 17:10-12 "If any man of the house of Israel, or one of the foreigners who dwell among them, eats any kind of blood, I will turn my face against the person who eats blood, and I will cut him off from the midst of his people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood. That is why I have commanded you to place him on the altar to make atonement for your persons; because the blood is what makes atonement, through life. Therefore I said to the children of Israel, None of you shall eat blood; Neither shall the stranger who dwells among you eat blood.

For God, blood is sacred because it is the very life of the living being; every time someone sinned, God spared his life in exchange for that of an animal sacrificed in his place, even if it was not always so because for some violations man had to die as God had ordained. Moreover, God wanted to teach man that without bloodshed, there could be no forgiveness of sins and cleansing. (Heb 9:22) But at that time, blood was not only used for atonement but could also be used to make covenants or bonds with gods or demons, as was the case in pagan peoples and as is the case in satanic sects today.

Suffocated animals

Deut 12:23-25 ... be absolutely careful not to eat its blood, because the blood is life, and you shall not eat life together with flesh. You will not eat it; you will spread it on the ground like water. You shall not eat it that you may be happy, and your children after you, when you have done what is right in the sight of the Lord.

Fornication

Nu 25:1-2 And Israel was stationed in Sittim, and the people began to fornicate with the daughters of Moab. They invited the people to the sacrifices offered to their gods; and the people ate and bowed down before their gods.

1 Corinthians 10:1,3-8 For I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, that our fathers... they all ate the same spiritual food, they all drank the same spiritual drink, because they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them; and that rock was Christ. But God was not pleased with most of them, for they were struck down in the wilderness. Now these things came to pass to serve as an example to us, that we might not be covetous of evil things, as they were, and that you might not become idolaters like some of them, as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to be merry." We do not fornicate as some of them fornicated and twenty-three thousand fell in one day.

1 Corinthians 6:13-15,18-20 ... But the body is not for fornication, but is for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body; God, just as he raised the Lord from the dead, so he will also raise us by his power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ to make them members of a prostitute? Certainly not! Flee from fornication. Every other sin that man commits is outside the body; but the fornicator sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you and whom you have received from

God? So you don't belong to yourself. Because you have been bought at a high price. Glorify God in your body.

Cl 3:5 "Therefore put to death what is earthly in you, fornication, uncleanness, passions, evil desires, and covetousness, which is idolatry." For these things comes the wrath of God upon the rebellious children.

Other Flesh Sacrificed to Idols - False Doctrines

While in the past the idolatrous practice of sacrificing animal offerings was more widespread, today the practice of offering contaminated spiritual food is more widespread.

2 Peter 2:1-2 ... there will also be false doctors among you who will secretly introduce heresies of perdition, and, denying the Lord who ransomed them, will bring immediate ruin upon themselves. Many will follow them in their debauchery; and because of them the way of truth will be defamed.

The Doctrines of Men

Mt 15:6 ... Thus you have annulled the word of God because of your tradition. Hypocrites, Isaiah prophesied well of you when he said: "This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. In vain do they worship me, teaching doctrines that are the precepts of men."

Ac 20:17,29-30 (The apostle Paul said) From Miletus he sent for the elders of the church to Ephesus. I know that after my departure ravenous wolves will come among you, and they will not spare the flock; and even among yourselves there will arise men who will teach perverse things to drag the disciples after them.

The doctrines of demons

1 Tim 4:1-2 "But the Spirit says plainly that in future times some will

depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, led astray by the hypocrisy of lying men, marked with a mark on their conscience.

2 Corinthians 11:3-4,13-15 ... I fear that, as the serpent seduced Eve by his cunning, so your minds will be corrupted and led astray from simplicity and purity to Christ. For if anyone comes to preach to you another Jesus, different from the one we have preached, or if it is a question of receiving a spirit different from the one you have received, or a gospel different from the one you have accepted, you willingly bear it. Those are false apostles, fraudulent workers, who disguise themselves as apostles of Christ. No wonder, because even satan disguises himself as an angel of light. It is not exceptional, therefore, if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness; their end will be according to their works.

2 Peter 3:16-18 ... ignorant and unstable men twist to their perdition as well as the other Scriptures. You, beloved, knowing these things, be on your guard lest you be led away by the error of the wicked, and thus fall from your steadfastness; but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory, now and forever. Amen.

2 Corinthians 13:13 "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all." Amen.