

The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society's Doctrinal Position on Blood
A
Discussion Between
Ron Rhoades and Marvin Shilmer

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Preface

The following dialogue between this writer, Marvin Shilmer¹, and a person presenting themselves as Ron Rhoades began with an email to the webmaster of a little known online discussion board called Touchstone Forum² where individuals discuss various subjects as they relate to the organizational policies and doctrinal teachings of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, the controlling organization of the religion of Jehovah's Witnesses. This initial email was to express appreciation for the more or less open exchange on topics related to the beliefs and brotherhood of Jehovah's Witnesses, and to share personal thoughts on two specific subjects. As it turned out the webmaster of Touchstone Forum saw fit to share this email with several persons, including Ron Rhoades. In turn Ron Rhoades saw fit to respond. Since Rhoades responded, and given the nature of his response, this writer felt obliged to answer and the following discussion was on.

Both Ron Rhoades and Marvin Shilmer profess themselves as members actively associated with the religious body known as Jehovah's Witnesses.

From here forward this work will present a full and unedited^{3,4} version of the ensuing discussion between Marvin Shilmer and Ron Rhoades but will offer a few brief notes along the way for clarification where deemed appropriate. These notes are in the form of double-bracketed comments and/or footnotes.

Marvin Shilmer

May 30, 2003

¹ As a combined first and last name, Marvin Shilmer is a pseudonym.

² <http://www.touchstoneforum.org>

³ Original typographical errors remain.

⁴ There is formatting contained in this presentation that is not part of the original emails. This formatting consists of indenting quotations of the two participants to aid readability.

From: Marvin Shilmer to Webmaster of touchstoneforum.org

Date: Wed, 13 Feb 2002 21:18 EST

Dear Webmaster of Touchstone.org:

I have read some threads on your forum, and mostly they are interesting. It is good to see more or less free exchange on topics related to our beliefs and brotherhood, that is of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Two subjects have recently come up that have my attention. Since I am not a registered member, I thought it appropriate to share my thoughts more informally by email.

The first subject relates to the Society having been a registered NGO with the UN for approximately the last 10 years. I read the polarized dialogue between contributors like Hawk and Ron Rhodes. I think both persons have missed (or avoided) the troublesome aspect of the circumstance, which is the decision made by the Society to voluntarily associate itself as closely as it did, registering as an NGO and remaining so for a decade.

I realize registration as an NGO with the UN was not and is not one of membership with the UN or of breaching the Christian ideal of neutrality toward political affairs. However, association as an NGO meant the Society voluntarily chose non-essential association with an organization that is an idol "image of the beast," and that is what has raised hackles. Certainly none of us can get out of the world. (1 Cor. 5:10) But we all have a prerogative regarding voluntary association, whether that association is by means of registration or otherwise. How we exercise our prerogative is how others determine our godliness and wisdom.

This NGO circumstance would not be too bad if it were not for a few troublesome facts.

1) The Society has, apparently, recently admitted that, at some point, NGO status became unfitting for Christians. Since this registration and continued registration as an NGO was carried on at the highest levels of our earthly organization, it makes one wonder if the decade of unfitting registered status with this idol organization has had some spiritual effect on our brotherhood. The principal of "spoiling useful habits" applies equally to us all, as individuals and as an organization.

2) The Society has, apparently, offered an explanation that something changed regarding what is expected of NGOs since 1991 when they originally applied. Since public records have not supported this assertion, and appear to contradict it from what I can tell, it becomes suspicious that the Society has not offered its own records of the 10 year involvement as an NGO. I know that love believes all things in that Christians should be trusting. But trusting does not mean naivety. Since UN officials have no reason to hide or obfuscate its stipulations for NGO status before, during or after 1991, suspicions are natural and should not be quickly dismissed.

So, as an active Jehovah's Witness and longtime supporter of the Society, on one hand this situation does not bother me. I agree with Ron and others that the Society has not violated Christian ideals like that of neutrality. On the other hand there is, I believe, serious cause for concern as related above. There is reason for concern over what effect this NGO association has had on our brothers at Bethel and our overall brotherhood as a result. Since even our governing body has, apparently, admitted this registration is unfitting for Christians, not to be minimized is the serious question of how does Jehovah view this episode? (Remember that David too once participated in an unfitting registration, and there were consequences. [2 Sam. 24:1-17] This was an act of one man at headquarters that had an adverse impact on the whole brotherhood of Jews!) There is also good reason for the natural suspicions that persons like Hawk apparently feel. I suppose we will never have enough facts to fully satisfy these concerns, and for that reason it is incumbent that we act as Christians should by leaning on Jehovah rather than any man, and then acting in good conscience. (Rom. 3:4)

The other subject of interest on your discussion board is that of our policies regarding blood, and agents made from or using blood. On that subject there are, I fear, many grave concerns. Certainly there are many unanswered questions. One real life circumstance that exemplifies these concerns is the following scenario.

We are instructed to shun publishers who conscientiously accept a platelet agent for sake of their child's well-being. Yet on the other hand we are instructed to respect publishers who conscientiously accept a similar or greater amount of a hemoglobin agent for sake of their child's well-being, by continuing to view them as "in good standing." I cannot explain this peculiarity because there is no scripture making such a distinction possible.

Of accepting infusions of blood parts in forms other than white cells, red cells, platelets or plasma, the Watchtower of June 15, 2000 wisely says on page 30, "Should Christians accept these fractions in medical treatment? We cannot say. The Bible does not give details, so a Christian must make his own conscientious decision before God." Well, likewise the Bible does not give details regarding white cells, red cells, platelets or plasma as elements. The Bible is just as silent about those blood parts as it is of other blood parts like hemoglobin and albumin. So, what scriptural detail directs us to shun fellow Witnesses over conscientiously accepting infusions of an agent containing a blood part such as platelets when we do not shun them for using a blood part such as hemoglobin? An answer to this question is crucial to defending our teaching and enforced shunning on the subject, that it is a solid scriptural position, rather than just a "religious position" as was emphasized at the most recent kingdom ministry school for elders.

I have thought long and hard about our apparent argument that some components of blood are, in effect, blood by means of them being major or primary parts of whole blood. My conclusion is that this argument is unsound and contradictory for at least two reasons.

1) I can find no biblical support for distinguishing between portions of blood as if one definitely amounts to blood that must be abstained from and that other portions of blood maybe do not amount to blood that must be abstained from.

2) An argument that major components of blood equate with blood is contrary to what we teach about the very thing blood was first said to stand for, soul. What do I mean here?

We teach a distinction of what equates with blood based on what is referred to in our publications as "major" or "primary" components of blood. For example, in effect we teach that "abstain from blood" means, among other things, abstain from "red cells." Do we apply the same reasoning, the same distinction, when it comes to the very thing blood is said to stand for, soul?

Scripturally, what is soul? Soul has two major components, "physical body" and "breath of life." Fleshly life does not exist without both these components together. In our reasoning and teaching we are very specific that neither of these components, though major, equate with soul. We teach that soul is nothing less than a combination of these two major components. (pe 72) If we applied the same reasoning to the scriptural symbol of soul, blood, then we would teach that no component of blood (major or not) equates with blood. We would teach, for instance, that "red cells" is no more blood than "breath of life" is soul. We would teach that blood is nothing less than a combination of major components just as soul is nothing less than a combination of major components. I am speechless to explain why we apply diametrically opposed reasoning between what equates with soul versus what equates with a symbol for soul, blood.

Our reasoning about what equates with soul is basic, simple, sound and, most importantly, scriptural. Why we do not apply the same fundamental reasoning equally toward the symbol of soul, blood, is beyond me to understand or explain.

I have run on quite a bit. Please forgive my intrusion on your time. Again, it is nice to see topics addressed in a respectful atmosphere. From time to time I will surely drop in to read discussions on your forum.

Thanks!

Marvin

From: Ron Rhoades to Webmaster of touchstoneforum.org and Marvin Shilmer, and 9 other email addresses

Date: Fri, 15 Feb 2002 15:50 EST

Dear John⁵,

I personally find this Marvin Shilmer to be either a figment of Hawk's imagination or a false "brother." To the word, he echos Hawk's arguments. His arguments contain the same contradictions, distortions and false reasonings that Hawk and other opposers insist on spreading.

This status as a "witness in good standing" is the standard claim of apostates and reformers. It is simply *designed* to discourage faithful Witnesses and as a deceptive reason to listen to this individual. Anyone who would remain part of an organization while privately making common cause with disgusting opposers is quite simply a hypocrite and liar, diseased in their thinking. Someone who disagrees and honestly removes himself from the organization can at least be accorded some respect for being honest. But, cowardly liars, deceptive snakes like this "Marvin Shilmer" are not even to be accorded the slightest consideration. Is there any reason anyone would even take such a self-avowed hypocrite seriously?

Almost every Witness has been part of a religious organization and removed themselves from that organization when they realized they could not agree with it's major teachings. They took a stand for what they believe and many times left family, jobs and social acceptance in order to be honest to their belief. Yet, this type of individual expects us to give him the time of day when he has no such sense of right? What a backboneless slimy son of Satan!

In my 35 years of experience, anyone who holds to such thinking in Jehovah's organization cannot maintain a "good standing." They first lose all holy spirit and then for the most part they stop their public ministry, commenting at meetings and then meeting attendance. This is the ultimate confirmation of the HS letting us know that these individuals actions and thinking is not in accord with Scripture. Thus, in making this claim such individuals are lying against the holy spirit. Yet, because of the merciful policy of the congregation in still considering them "part of the congregation" they dishonestly make the claim that they are in "good standing." I challenge this claim by "Marvin Shilmer." Would he care to prove that claim?

My recommendation is to let this individual know what his true standing is before Jehovah and then ignore his false, diseased, Satanic and apostate vomit. When he decides to come out from under his slimy rock and either makes a stand for what he believes or seeks help from those who have Jehovah's spirit then we can accord what he says with some plausibility.

(Romans 9:22; Jude 9-10, 12-13; 2 Peter 2:12-22)

"But these [men], like unreasoning animals born naturally to be caught and destroyed, will, in the things of which they are ignorant and speak abusively, even suffer destruction in their own [course of] destruction. They are spots and blemishes, indulging with unrestrained delight in their deceptive teachings while feasting together with YOU. They are accursed children. Abandoning the straight path, they have been misled...and for them the blackness of darkness has been reserved. While they are promising them freedom, they themselves are existing as slaves of corruption. The saying of the true proverb has happened to them: "The dog has returned to its own vomit."

Yours,

Ron Rhoades

⁵ John is the webmaster of Touchstone Forum

From: Marvin Shilmer to Ron Rhoades, and other email addresses Rhoades copied his comments to

Date: Fri, 15 Feb 2002 17:11 EST

Dear Ron Rhoades,

I have no idea what evoked your vitriolic response to my sincere comments to Touchstone.org's webmaster, whoever that is. But your response directed toward my person and circumstances is hardly in line with God's spirit directed wisdom to avoid replying to a matter before it is even heard. (Prov. 18:13) The least you could have done was to contact me privately, and first! Maybe then your fears would have been allayed to your satisfaction. I believe they would have, without a doubt. Of course, if something came up in the way of actually evidencing your vicious claims against me, then so be it. It is not slander to make accurate accusations based on fact!

I don't know you, but frankly at this point I am not inclined to share more of my identity (more than my name, that is) with someone of your apparent penchant to draw horrible conclusions without the slightest bit of inquiry first. As for carrying on any discussions with you, it is one thing to objectively analyze assertions and conclusions. It is quite another to hurl accusations that amount to nothing less than ad hominem. Therefore, if you expect to be taken seriously I suggest you do what other respectable brothers do, draw conclusions based on established premises and sound reasoning rather than avoiding substance because you don't like the person (for whatever reason). People may or may not be bad, but that only changes the focus of a serious discussion among the weak or feeble minded. If we do end up discussing my email to Touchstone.org's webmaster then have at it. If it is true that I have concocted bad questions and concerns based on twisted reasoning then point it out. But hurling rocks at persons is just not mature, to say nothing of the manliness of it, or not.

Giving you the benefit of a doubt, I will conclude at this point that you have simply had a bad day and responded without thinking.

Webmaster and John,

I wish Ron Rhoades had not made it necessary that I make these statements in view of others. But since he took it upon himself to make such horrible and vicious accusations against someone he doesn't have the decency to even question first, plus slanderously sharing his views to you all, I feel there was no other respectable choice.

The one calling himself Hawk is not a brother, I am. We are not the same person and Ron Rhoades is totally out to lunch with an assertion that I might be a figment of Hawk's mind. From what I can tell, my life in the good way of Jehovah's Witnesses is probably richer than many others on your forum. Neither local brothers nor anyone else that knows me in person or online has the slightest bit of disrespect for me as a Witness. In fact the opposite is true as far as I can know. Certainly I am very active in the important preaching of the good news, together with the whole association of our brothers.

My intentions are sincere and honest. There is no serious discussion of doctrinal points if the subject matter turns out to be no more than personalities of the contributors. Idle talk about personalities is worthless. The meat is in substantive and objective discussion of ideas, in this case biblical ideas regarding doctrinal points. (Phillipians 1:7) That is where our way of life is.

May Jehovah, the God of peace be with us all.

Sincerely,

Marvin

From: Ron Rhoades to Webmaster of touchstoneforum.org and Marvin Shilmer, and 9 other email addresses

Date: Fri, 15 Feb 2002 20:03 EST

To the contrary. My estimate of you is based on your own words and methods. My response is directly in line with God's spirit directed wisdom as evidenced and exemplified by the Scriptures I cited. The very fact that you refuse to identify yourself in order for us to verify your claims of being in "fine standing" testifies not only to the falseness of your claims but also to the fact that you personally recognize your lying hypocrisy.

If you think I have misjudged you identify yourself and let's take it to your local body of elders and see if they don't come up with the same estimate!

Ron Rhoades

From: Ron Rhoades to Hector and Marvin Shilmer, and 9 other email addresses

Date: Fri, 15 Feb 2002 20:08 EST

Hector,

You are quite right! This person hides who he is on line. He hides who he is in real life. Last I checked that is exactly what a hypocrite is. And then he expects people to respect him? He isn't even honest with himself since he won't take a stand for what he says he believes in.

Ron

Hector3001@aol.com wrote:

>

> I see your name also on

> <http://watchtower.observer.org/apps/pbcs.dll/artikkel?Avis=WO&Dato=20010529&Kategori=NEWS&Lopenr=10528002&Ref=AR> (this is the same guy that writes to me on a regular basis to swear at me.

> and

>

> <http://www.jehovahs-witness.com/forum/thread.asp?id=840&site=3>

>

> where you are again writing against JW's.

>

> And I see you have forgotten about that pdf document which indicated that you had also authored a piece (alone) against JW's.

>

> Face it man, you're busted.

> -Heinz

From: Marvin Shilmer to Webmaster of Touchstone Forum and Ron Rhoades, and other email addresses
Rhoades copied his comments to

Date: Fri, 15 Feb 2002 22:27 EST

Dear Touchstone Webmaster,

I don't know what these two clowns, Ron and Heinz, are all about, but they are too quick at trying to assassinate character. How can they sit and hold an intelligent conversation when not once have they been willing to address aspects of issues raised by a man, but instead are content to simply throw rocks at the man. We all know how easy it is to throw verbal rocks, but that sort of talk does not make subjects or serious questions just go away. This is why ad hominem is the fallacy that it is. All it does is foolishly avoid the subject. Well, I have news. I am not the subject. None of us are. Any of us could be here or gone tomorrow and the same subjects would still be here, for someone to intelligently discuss, hopefully.

One of these clowns says I am somehow 'busted,' as if I have done something to be ashamed of, or that I tried to hide. What rubbish this is, and ill reasoned! None of my writings are anything for me to hide or be ashamed of, not as one of Jehovah's Witnesses. I had nothing to do with that article partially credited to me about the Society distorting quotations. But other material like that from the British Medical Journal (online version) is mine, and I did not put my name on the contents lightly. What I shared there was honest and sincere. Someone must be willing to come forth on those sorts of subjects because the issues and stakes are real, and precious few of our brothers have the courage to talk about them, at least in the light of day. As one of Jehovah's Witnesses, the day I am told it is wrong to speak honestly and make sure of all things by analyzing doctrine and religious policy in light of God's holy words, and also seeking discussion of the same, well that is the day we turn into followers of men instead of followers of our Master, Jesus. I cannot imagine Jesus acting as have these other two, Ron and Heinz, to someone who is seeking dialogue for the sake of growing.

If these two, or anyone else, thinks I am dishonest then they need to ask themselves one question. Why did I address you (and them now) as who I am, brother Shilmer? I know what I have written online is there to find. Certainly I knew that! I am not stupid. If I am dishonest as they claim then I would have tried hiding my identity from the beginning in order to have a presence on your forum. But this is not what I did or what I am about. I am honest.

If anyone here wants to talk substantively about aspects of subjects I have raised in my initial email to you, fine. I am more than happy to discuss such things and ideas. But I do not have the time to talk about persons. I leave that to little minds.[1] For a certainty I have not the time or inclination to butt heads with individuals who apparently are more interested in throwing rocks than in dealing with legitimate subject matter.

Your brother,

Marvin

Reference

1. Awake of July 8, 1989 p 19: "It is said that great minds talk about ideas, average minds talk about things, and small minds talk about people!"

From: Ron Rhoades to Webmaster of touchstoneforum.org and Marvin Shilmer, and 9 other email addresses

Date: Fri, 15 Feb 2002 23:00 EST

Shillman,

Your claim to honesty is laughable. If you were honest you would identify yourself and make a stand for your beliefs instead of hiding what you really believe and continue to hypocritically associat with an organization you do not agree with. That is, IF you really are even associated with a congregation. Why would we trust your words on that when you have admitted hypocritically hiding what you really think?

You dare to criticize the WTS for in your view "associating" with the UN which they disagree with, but you are doing just that yourself, and worse. The Society never hid what they did, but you **realize** you don't agree with the WTS and yet you **continue** to associate yourself and lead others to believe that you do agree with them.

The only way you could claim honesty is to remove yourself from a fake, hypocritical relationship.

But, your too much of a coward to do that!

Ron

From: Marvin Shilmer to Ron Rhoades, and other email addresses Rhoades copied his comments to

Date: Fri, 15 Feb 2002 22:41 EST

Caps added:

Ron Rhoades <rrhoades@jps.net> wrote:

>...The very
>fact that you REFUSE to identify yourself in order for us to verify your
>claims of being in "fine standing" testifies not only to the falseness
>of your claims but also to the fact that you personally recognize your
>lying hypocrisy.
>
>If you think I have misjudged you identify yourself and let's take it to
>your local body of elders and see if they don't come up with the same
>estimate!
>
>Ron Rhoades
>

You know my name. Shilmer. As for anything MORE of my identity, I guess English is not your department. I will refresh your memory. I said:

>Marvin Shilmer wrote:
>>
>> Dear Ron Rhoades,

>...
>I don't know you, but frankly at this point I am not inclined to share
>MORE of my identity (more than MY NAME, that is) with someone of your >apparent penchant to
>draw horrible conclusions without the slightest bit >on inquiry first....

That you know my name is enough for someone of your aberrance.

The day you'd rather talk substance rather than person, let me know. In the meantime, try not to clog my email.

Your brother

--

From: Marvin Shilmer to Ron Rhoades, and other email addresses Rhoades copied his comments to

Date: Fri, 15 Feb 2002 23:20 EST

Ron Rhoades <rrhoades@jps.net> wrote:

>Shillman,

>

>Your claim to honesty is laughable. If you were honest you would
>identify yourself and make a stand for your beliefs instead of hiding
>what you really believe and continue to hypocritically associat with an
>organization you do not agree with.

I have identified myself well enough, and as far as possible given your demeanor.

As for my beliefs, better put the subject is that of my questions and concerns. Like everyone else, I have drawn certain conclusions after examining issues of importance to me, and I am willing to stand and discuss them. Is that what you want? Or are is this just an empty invitation that I should show up for more of your personal rock throwing?

As for my association with Jehovah's Witnesses and the Society, I am not one for throwing the baby out with the bath water. If you don't understand that then perhaps that should be among the first discussions. I can stand and defend the good people of Jehovah's Witnesses and the merits of the Society, and will do so.

>That is, IF you really are even
>associated with a congregation. Why would we trust your words on that
>when you have admitted hypocritically hiding what you really think?
>

Please show us all where I have "admitted hypocritically hiding what [I] really think." To my knowledge I have not hidden my real thinking.

>You dare to criticize the WTS for in your view "associating" with the UN
>which they disagree with, but you are doing just that yourself, and
>worse. The Society never hid what they did, but you *realize* you don't
>agree with the WTS and yet you *continue* to associate yourself and lead
>others to believe that you do agree with them.
>

This is your opinion. But my comments on that subject are not so much criticism as they are shared concerns. I did not even have these concerns until the Society, apparently, let it be know that their continued state of NGO registration was unfitting for Christians. This is what made me wonder of the effects of the whole episode, on our brotherhood that is. I believe in the beginning there was nothing but good intentions in the registration. But as we know, good intentions are not always good enough. Sometimes good intentions turn our detrimental.

>The only way you could claim honesty is to remove yourself from a fake,
>hypocritical relationship.
>

Because I have no fake relationships I do not share your feelings on this. Should I end a relationship simply over past or even possible present mistakes when those mistakes were probably made with good and lofty intentions by godly men trying there best?

I don't know about you, but one endearing characteristic of our association of brothers is our willingness to change in the face of soundly reasoned biblical analysis, in spite of past cherished views. At this point this is one feature of "the baby" I refuse to throw out.

Besides avoiding the proverbial throwing out of "the baby" with the "bathwater," I also act conscientiously toward helping my brothers, even if that means being willing to discuss hard subjects, like aspects of our religious position on use of blood. Please remember, I didn't invent the subjects. Like everyone else, all I can do is see, analyze, discuss, reason on and, finally, draw conclusions. If you are a logical thinker than you also know that because conclusions are sound does not make them correct. It only makes them logically sound, or true logically. Because premises may turn out to be different than originally evidenced then conclusions may turn out different today than from yesterday. Therefore, for me and most everyone else, learning must continue in practically every area.

>But, your too much of a coward to do that!
>

I am willing to talk about the hard subjects. Are you?

Your brother
--

From: Marvin Shilmer to Ron Rhoades

Date: Sun, 24 Feb 2002 2:13 EST

Dear, Ron

This is a long letter. If you move to the end you will see my motive in writing you. Please do not take umbrage at anything herein. I seek answers, not anger and abusive speech.

The last few days I have looked over your comments on the Greek Theology (GT) forum.

One of those entries contains a comment I very much agree with when you say, "...Christian theology should be primarily based on the Scriptures." But I saw your responders did not understand the subject clearly enough to argue the difficult issues involved regarding distinctions made in the Society's doctrinal position. Your explanation were likewise lacking for at least two reasons. 1) Because you failed to show scriptural support for specifics of certain important assertions of yours and 2) one particular of your assertions undermines your own conclusion.

At Greek Theology you wrote[1]:

>>>[Roy]: It is the presented theology, and not myself that makes such distinctions about blood. It is this theology that asserts that certain blood components are no longer blood after they are extracted from blood, not me.<<<<

[Ron] A slight correction here. No one has (officially) asserted that certain blood components "are no longer blood." What has been determined is that it is the decision of each individual to determine for themselves if blood fractions may be used. The Scriptures simply state that "blood" belongs to Jehovah and must be considered sacred as representing life. When the Scriptures were written this would be understood to include any part of the blood recognizable at that time. They did not have the scientific means to recognize fractions and microscopic particles known today. They also were not able to identify major components that might have been present in other substances. To Israelites and Christians, if it visibly came from blood it was to be held sacred and avoided.

[Ron] The parts that they were able to separate by cooking, drying, filtering and etc. would still be recognized as blood by first century Christians, IMHO.

End quote.

Your correction of Roy's statement was correct because the Society's doctrinal position does not assert that certain parts from blood are no longer blood. Roy's comment betrays that he is not as intimately familiar with the Society's position as he might think. Better put, he should have said, "It is this theology that asserts that certain blood components are [maybe] no longer blood after they are extracted from blood...." Such a statement would have been precisely accurate. Now on to your assertions.

You asserted that "blood" belonging to Jehovah "would be understood to include any part of the blood recognizable at that time." This assertion undermines the very thing you are trying to defend, the Society's doctrinal position that there is some scriptural distinction between some portions (or forms of parts of blood) of blood definitely being "blood" and other portions (or forms of...) maybe not being "blood." How?

What parts of the blood were "recognizable at the time"? At best the only parts of blood recognizable at the time would have been water versus solids, or more precisely plasma versus everything else together. (Compare John 19:24; HAIMA and HUDOR) Of course, the water (HUDOR) portion would have been plasma and the solid portion would have been everything else together. But since the Society's doctrinal position draws a more detailed distinction than this, then your premise that "blood" belonging to Jehovah "would be understood to include any part of the blood recognizable at that time" does not support distinctions made by the Society. For your premise to work the Society's doctrinal position would have to look like this:

1) Whole plasma (the water) is definitely “blood” and 2) everything else together less the plasma is “blood.” 3) Anything less might not be “blood” therefore to abstain from it must be left to each Christian.

Since the Society’s doctrinal position makes distinctions beyond this, then your premise does not support it. “At the time” biblical characters had no way of recognizing parts of blood like red cells, white cells and platelets any more than they could have recognized, for example, hemoglobin from red cells. According to your premise, since these parts of blood could not have been recognized then they must not have definitely been “blood” that Christians must have abstained from. But let’s keep looking over what you wrote to Roy, it gets more interesting.

You went on to say, “They did not have the scientific means to recognize fractions and microscopic particles known today.” This statement intimates that “fractions” are somehow microscopic compared to what was recognizable. The problem with the statement is that to those living “at the time” platelets were just as microscopic; white cells were just as microscopic; red cells were just as microscopic. In each case “they did not have the scientific means to recognize” the very portions of blood that the Society’s doctrinal position holds as definitely “blood.”

You then go on to tell Roy, “They also were not able to identify major components that might have been present in other substances.” Tell me this: Could biblical characters living “at the time” have identified platelets or albumin as elements of blood whether they were in other substances or not? If not then your statement is meaningless and therefore of no value to defending distinctions promoted by the Society’s doctrinal position.

The fact of the matter, Ron, is that people back then were without “scientific means” to identify parts of blood like white cells or platelets just as they had no “scientific means” to identify parts of blood like albumin or hemoglobin.

In the end the very premise you want to use in defense of the WTS’ doctrinal position turns out as self-defeating, because if “blood” is that which “would be understood to include any part of the blood recognizable at that time,” then white cells, platelets et al would not be held as definitely “blood.” But, again, this is not the Society’s doctrinal position. The Society teaches that white cells and platelets et al are “blood.”

I read your other comments about transferals between a mother and her unborn via the placenta, but, as you say and I agree, Christian theology should be primarily based on the Scriptures. But let’s look a bit at this situation anyway.

In a nutshell your argument is that parts of blood that transfer naturally according to Jehovah’s creation are maybe not “blood” that we must abstain from since this process is naturally occurring. Okay, even though this is not part of Jehovah’s written word, the Bible, let’s say we can legitimately use this as testimony of the creative works, therefore by extension His word on the matter. (Ps. 19:1-3) If we accept this testimony then we have to accept all of it. Have you ever heard of diamniotic-monochorionic twins (DMT)? If not, I suggest you familiarize yourself with the subject because it speaks to this issue just like the mother-to-unborn subject speaks to the issue. In both cases we have a naturally occurring transfer in Jehovah’s creation.

DMT describes unborn twin babies that have their own placenta and their own circulatory system but share some vessels between each other.[2,3] Throughout the pregnancy whole blood is transfused via these shared vessels back and forth between the two babies. So, though each child has its own circulatory system (just as does a mother and her child) in the case of DMT they actually transfuse whole blood back and forth throughout the pregnancy. Of course, when whole blood is transfused between a mother and her unborn (as does sometime occur) this could cause death because of rejection of foreign tissue. But the blood of these twins is identical because they are identical twins; therefore the blood transfused back and forth does not usually cause problems because it is perfectly matched just as creation would have it. The only problem with whole blood transfusion between DMT babies is a condition called twin transfusion syndrome (TTTS) that afflicts about 15-percent of DMT cases. TTTS occurs when one baby transfuses more blood to his twin than he has transfused back into him. Just as troublesome blood transfusions between a mother and a child range from mild to severe, likewise cases of TTTS range from mild to severe.

Therefore with DMT babies we have in creation a perfectly healthy and naturally occurring instance of whole blood transfusion in the 85% of occurrences of DMT cases where there is no TTTS. If we follow your premise

that blood parts transferring naturally according to Jehovah's creation are maybe not "blood" that we must abstain from since this process is naturally occurring, then we must conclude that transfusion of whole blood is maybe not "blood" that we must abstain from because we see it occurring naturally in cases of DMT babies.

Another argument you use has to do with the fact that the Mosaic Law did not allow any use of blood by Israelites. While I agree with that statement, details of the Mosaic Law on blood are not an automatic transfer to everyone else in God's eyes. (uw 148 par.6; 149 par. 8) Not to be forgotten is the initial record of Jehovah issuing a prohibition on blood as found in the Noachian Law. (Gen. 9) There is no biblical record that Noah or his descendants (other than Jews later on) had to abstain from using blood other than abstaining from eating blood of animals killed for food. (it1 344 par. 4; 345 par. 6) Also not to be forgotten is that God himself set the standard of using animal parts for practical uses, like clothing for the body. (Gen. 3:21) So for all we know from Adam onward humans may have used blood for some practical uses just as they probably did with other portions of an animal's dead body. Blood could have been used as a crude glue, or for wall paintings like we find in some ancient cave habitations, and maybe other things too. I am not asserting that Adam or Noah used blood this way, but it is a fact that there is no biblical prohibition of using blood in these and other similar ways for anyone until the Mosaic Law and then only for Jews, but today Christians are not under the Mosaic Law, we are under Christian law.

The problem with trying to tie the Mosaic Law to the Christian Apostolic Decree to abstain from blood is this:

1) The Apostolic Decree only tells us to abstain from blood and things strangled. (Strangled flesh contains blood by virtue of improper bleeding. See it1 345 par. 8)

2) From the Bible record we can say that Noah had to "abstain from blood." But Noah did not have to completely abstain from blood as if God had prohibited any other use of it other than eating the blood of animals killed for food.

3) From the Bible record we can also say that Jews from Moses time onward had to "abstain from blood," but in God's eyes to a greater degree than anyone else. Jews had to completely abstain from blood because, as you correctly assert, they had to pour out blood that they were not using in atonement sacrifices. For Jews God had required a special, sacred use for blood and he therefore required that Jews treat blood as sacred by not using it for anything other than the sacred sacrifices he required of them. (Lev. 17:11,12)

Since the Apostolic Decree only says to abstain from blood (and things strangled) then how are we to know for sure if this prohibition applies as it did to Noah who was not under the Mosaic Law or to Jews who were under the Mosaic Law? Unless we can prove that the Christian Apostolic Decree puts us under provisions of the Mosaic Law related to blood abstention then we cannot successfully argue that the Apostolic Decree is anything more than a reiteration of the Noachian Law as it relates to blood abstention. None of your arguments have done this.

I too have read your comments to the effect that the Apostolic Decree does "not include a limitation to "eating," but seems to be an all encompassing command to "avoid blood." [4] Like so many others you consistently draw a comparison between the decree to abstain from blood being as weighty as that to abstain from fornication, as though they are both as categorical. Is this true?

Historically Christians can watch, feel of or think about blood without any recrimination. On the other hand, Christians should not watch, feel of or think about fornication. So the two abstentions are not perfect parallels. In the case of blood the Apostolic Decree tells us to abstain from blood but it does not say what blood we should abstain from (our own, donated, of a dead carcass, taken from killing) or to what extent to abstain (as contrasted between Noah and Moses). Nor does it indicate the type of abstention required (i.e., eat/drink, look at, feel of, think about, et al). Therefore your assertion that the Apostolic Decree does "not include a limitation to "eating," but seems to be an all encompassing command to "avoid blood" is not evidenced unless you would assert that Christian should abstain from watching blood, feeling of blood, thinking about blood, et al. Would you assert such a thing? Could you prove such an assertion?

By now you must think I am trying to pick on you, but this is not the case. Like any other serious subject, I research as thoroughly as possible. I have read so much on this subject, which has resulted in concerns I have raised that you are familiar with. Lately I found and recognized that you have ability to draw conclusions based

on sound argumentation, so I spent some time to see if you had applied yourself to the subject of the Society's doctrinal position on blood and offered reasoning that was helpful. I found what is addressed in this letter.

You may not believe this, but my motives are true and I do work very hard as one of Jehovah's Witnesses toward living up to my dedication to Jehovah. I also have deep brotherly affection for our brotherhood. But my sincere motivation, dedication to God and brotherly affection are the very things driving me to make sure of what is fine regarding the whole subject of blood as it relates to modern medicine. I conclude this letter by asking that you help me if you can. In the end I am to the true God just what you are. (Job 33:6) Since I believe your education may be more extensive than my own and because of your ability to soundly argue, I ask for help on the subject I have addressed here with considerable time.

Your brother,

Marvin Shilmer

References:

[1] <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/greektheology/message/6324>

[2] http://webmd.lycos.com/content/dmk/dmk_article_3961211

[3] <http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/servlet/useragent?func=synergy&synergyAction=showFullText&doi=10.1046/j.1469-0705.2001.00355.x>

[4] <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/greektheology/message/6351>

From: Ron Rhoades to Marvin Shilmer

Date: Sun, 24 Feb 2002 2:54 EST

Marvin,

I only have had time to glance at your e-mail. I will thoroughly look over your message as I have the time. I am currently involved in other research that I consider more pressing than any response to you.

I will not ignore you, but will let you know if I choose to respond. If I do, I hope you realize that I will not give you even a slight "benefit of doubt," since as I made it plain in my previous challenge in respect to your claim of being "in fine standing" I consider you to be willfully subversive to obvious Truth. A "reformer" leading a spiritual "double-life" at the very *least.*

Yours,

Ron Rhoades

From: Marvin Shilmer to Ron Rhoades

Date: Sun, 24 Feb 2002 22:54 EST

Dear Brother Rhoades,

I appreciate your feelings and extend my thanks for whatever time you spend helping me out.

Sincerely,

Marvin

From: Marvin Shilmer to Ron Rhoades

Date: Sat, 30 Mar 2002 8:36 EST

Dear Brother Rhoades (Wrench)⁶

Today I read the exchange on your Touchstoneforum.org forum of the incident in Calgary involving the blood issue. It amazes me that so many are willing to spend as much time as they do responding to these things yet ignore important details of the doctrinal position they say represents God's will.

Why do you think participants take the time to reply to these types of discussions centered on our doctrinal position on blood yet ignore important discussions, ones that actually deal with the difficult details of the same subject? Why do you suppose people fear answering for telling details of a doctrinal position they would be ready to let a child die over? Questions like:

"Why must JW's SHUN a JW parent who accepts a platelet agent for sake of saving their child's life but must RESPECT a JW parent who accepts a similar or greater amount of a hemoglobin agent for sake of saving their child's life? Can anyone offer a sound scriptural answer to this religious position, one that discriminates between two substances every bit as much from blood and of blood?"

And:

"Why is it OKAY for JW's to use substances made from donated whole blood but it's NOT OKAY for JW's to donate whole blood themselves so that it too can be broken down into all the many specific agents that are okay for JW's to accept?"

And:

"Why is it OKAY for JW's to accept blood parts that non-JW's have donated? Why don't we at least donate enough whole blood for all the blood our own brothers make use of (e.g., hemoglobin, albumin, factor VIII, et al)?" [Do you know how many units of donated whole blood it takes just for the injections used by our brothers with hemophilia?]

Your brother,

Marvin

⁶ This email was written under the impression that Ron Rhoades and Wrench of Touchstone Forum were one and the same person. Rhoades informed me this is not the case. Nevertheless this email to Rhoades is a relevant part of the discussion between Rhoades and myself because of the subject matter itself and that it stems from Rhoades' comments that, in this case, happened to be offered initially online at Touchstone Forum.

From: Ron Rhoades to Marvin Shilmer

Date: Sat, 30 Mar 2002 13:13 EST

Marvin,

I believe you have sent this to me by mistake. I'm not Wrench, and I haven't had the time to get to the Touchstone forum for several weeks now. :(

However, I am in the process of replying to your letter to me. Hopefully I will find the time to get it finished by the end of this week.

Ron Rhoades

From: Marvin Shilmer to Ron Rhoades

Date: Wed, 17 Apr 2002 20:59 EST

Dear Ron,

Thanks for your response. Sorry for not getting back until now. Travel has consumed my time lately.

I went back to see why my confusion of you with Wrench. It seems Wrench had copied one of your earlier posts under his name; thus I thought you two were one and the same. Having taken a closer look, I see now that Wrench clarified his post by attributing it to you. I apologize for my mistake of identification.

I look forward to your reply, though.

Hope all is well.

Marvin

From: Ron Rhoades to Marvin Shilmer

Date: Sat, 27 Apr 2002 2:03 EST

Marvin,

Finally. Sorry for the delay.

>[Shilmer]: The last few days I have looked over your comments on the Greek Theology (GT) forum. Your correction of Roy's statement was correct because the Society's doctrinal position does not assert that certain parts from blood are no longer blood. ...Better put, he should have said, "It is this theology that asserts that certain blood components are [maybe] no longer blood after they are extracted from blood..." Such a statement would have been precisely accurate. Now on to your assertions.<

I debated whether to address this or not since, in practice, it is an irrelevant minutiae.

I think that it's important to keep in mind that whether blood fractions are or are not "still blood" is not a decision or doctrinal position of the Society. Your adding "maybe" makes it more accurate, but I don't think you maintain this throughout your comments. The Society's position is that the matter of blood fractions is not directly resolved in Scripture and so this decision is **outside** any definite doctrinal or theological decision by the Society.

Therefore the Witnesses' precise stand is that blood is sacred and not to be used for nourishment (food). As "food" primary components definitely are "blood" according to Scripture. This category as "food" is explicitly "Scriptural" and thus primary components are not to be taken into our body. On the other hand, there is logical and scientific evidence that fractions do not fall under the category of "food" or considered sacred by Jehovah. Since this modern knowledge creates a "grey area" concerning the classification as food and whether they fall within the principal of sacredness **individuals** must determine this for themselves.

>[Shilmer]: One of those entries contains a comment I very much agree with when you say, "...Christian theology should be primarily based on the Scriptures..." Your explanation were likewise lacking for at least two reasons. 1) Because you failed to show scriptural support for specifics of certain important assertions of yours and 2) one particular of your assertions undermines your own conclusion.<

I always find it interesting when critics of the Christian stand on blood demand **specific** "Scriptural" statements of doctrine or theological understandings. Witnesses do completely base our doctrines and belief on clear Scriptural statements. However, a strict Scriptural stand would not only undermine but would totally destroy your argument for allowing the use of primary blood components. If we were to take a strict Scriptural position then we would not even allow fractions or even molecules derived from blood to be taken into our body. The Scriptures clearly state that we must abstain from blood! Scripture does not even imply any exception or use beyond pouring on the ground. So, criticizing Witnesses for allowing personal decisions on the use of blood fractions would have a more **Scriptural** basis than your criticizing them for not allowing major components!

Yet, revealing the selfish, baseless reasoning of these critics, instead of criticizing the Society's "relaxing" of the mandate, they instead want to blatantly ignore Scriptural law to one degree or the other. And this without a single valid Scriptural reason for doing so. What a hypocritical stand!

My explanations were not "lacking" for the arguments presented by Roy. Obviously, they were not designed to answer your present points.

>[Shilmer]: At Greek Theology you wrote [1]: >>[Ron] What has been determined is that it is the decision of each individual to determine for themselves if blood fractions may be used. The Scriptures simply state that "blood" belongs to Jehovah and must be considered sacred as representing life. When the Scriptures were written this would be understood to include any part of the blood recognizable at that time. They did not have the scientific means to recognize fractions and microscopic particles known today...To Israelites and Christians, if it visibly came from blood it was to be held sacred and

avoided...The parts that they were able to separate by cooking, drying, filtering and etc. would still be recognized as blood by first century Christians, IMHO.<<

>[Shilmer]: You asserted that “blood” belonging to Jehovah “would be understood to include any part of the blood recognizable at that time.” This assertion undermines the very thing you are trying to defend, the Society’s doctrinal position that there is some scriptural distinction between some portions (or forms of parts of blood) of blood definitely being “blood” and other portions (or forms of...) maybe not being “blood.” How?<

Nothing here “undermines” the Witnesses’ Scriptural position nor our Scriptural conclusions regarding the application of the decree.

First, you are misapplying my words. I did not offer this as support or evidence for making a distinction between “parts of blood” today. Quite the contrary, I was using it as an argument to show that simply separating parts is not the basis for saying they are no longer “blood” which is what Roy asserted. My words were specifically applied to identification of “blood” in **bible times**. I then pointed out JW’s do not take a **doctrinal stand** concerning use of “fractions” and proceeded to give one evidence as a reason for this, which you cover below.

Also, you here arbitrarily attempted to make a technical specification out of my words while ignoring that they are manifestly of a reasoning nature. The only “technical” specification we have is the Scriptural “Abstain from blood.”

I gave Roy logical reasoning which would be applied by Christians during all ages in avoiding blood. If it were simply based on separation of parts, even today we would scripturally and reasonably reject even the use of fractions. My point was a logical one: No individual who wished to obey God would separate any part of blood and conclude that it was “no longer blood” simply to sidestep the divine mandate. In the conversation with Roy I did not see the need to go into detail on the Scriptural reasons that we use to reject use of major components since that was not the thrust of his argument. (If you look at the discussions with Harold Holmyard you would see more arguments addressing your points.)

The basis for our doctrine is explicit Scriptural statements. First, the primary and all encompassing principle is that animal as well as human blood is sacred and, second, the specific application of this principle to not use blood for food (bodily sustenance). Every possible use of any blood must be in harmony with these two clear statements in scripture. The use of major blood components in transfusions is obviously contrary to the specific command not to “eat” blood. Since eating animal blood was specifically denounced as a violation of the sanctity of blood, eating human blood would even be worse.

Primary components are obviously “blood,” and can even be categorized as “food.” Therefore, the doctrine banning their use is soundly derived from Scripture. Conversely, since Jehovah allows fractions to be passed between circulatory systems and the fact that non-cellular fractions do not seem to be classed as a “food” both give evidence that perhaps they are not to be included in the ban.

>[Shilmer]: For your premise to work the Society’s doctrinal position would have to look like this:1) Whole plasma (the water) is definitely “blood” and 2) everything else together less the plasma is “blood.” 3) Anything less might not be “blood” therefore to abstain from it must be left to each Christian. Since the Society’s doctrinal position makes distinctions beyond this, then your premise does not support it.<

No. Since you have misapplied my argument to a different facet of the issue your conclusion regarding my “premise” here is useless.

The modern **doctrinal** position for all Christians looks like this: 1. “Abstain from the use of blood.” In modern times we are forced to recognize a further consideration: 2. When confronted by modern scientific methods which identify non-food use of fractions and person to person transference of these fractions in God’s creation, we must admit there is reason conclude that these may not fall under the Scriptural ban to eat or against the principle of sanctity. Since Scripture is silent on this, each individual must decide for himself concerning their use.

While there is evidence logically excluding fractions derived from blood, similar evidence excluding the primary components is completely lacking. Thus, there is absolutely no excuse for the use of any major components in transfusions.

>[Shilmer]: “At the time” biblical characters had no way of recognizing parts of blood like red cells, white cells and platelets any more than they could have recognized, for example, hemoglobin from red cells. According to your premise, since these parts of blood could not have been recognized then they must not have definitely been “blood” that Christians must have abstained from. But let’s keep looking over what you wrote to Roy, it gets more interesting.<

Again, you have misused my reasoning. I did not give this as an evidence for identifying what is not blood, that is only a conclusion you have incorrectly insinuated into my argument. Your conclusion is also illogical here since first century Christian’s incapability in identifying microscopic elements would not logically remove those elements from being “blood” for us. To the contrary, what they did recognize included **everything** including fractions, so using your reasoning we would also have to include fractions. However, I have provided you with the Scriptural and scientific logic we have used to limit our doctrinal position to only major components.

>[Shilmer]: I read your other comments about transferals between a mother and her unborn via the placenta, but, as you say and I agree, Christian theology should be primarily based on the Scriptures. But let’s look a bit at this situation anyway.<

Our doctrine is based completely on the Scriptures. Scripture also allows the use of reason to reconcile “gray areas” and where there is no direct conflict with Scripture we can allow personal choice. Scientific evidence concerning fractions places them in this doctrinal “grey area” where we cannot prescribe a decision.

>[Shilmer]: In a nutshell your argument is that parts of blood that transfer naturally according to Jehovah’s creation are maybe not “blood” that we must abstain from since this process is naturally occurring. Okay, even though this is not part of Jehovah’s written word, the Bible, let’s say we can legitimately use this as testimony of the creative works, therefore by extension His word on the matter. (Ps. 19:1-3) If we accept this testimony then we have to accept all of it. Have you ever heard of diamniotic-monochorionic twins (DMT)? If not, I suggest you familiarize yourself with the subject because it speaks to this issue just like the mother-to-unborn subject speaks to the issue. In both cases we have a naturally occurring transfer in Jehovah’s creation.<

“Legitimately use this as testimony of the creative works, therefore by extension His word on the matter.” This is very well put, I hope you don’t mind if I plagiarize it sometime. :)

>[Shilmer]: DMT describes unborn twin babies that have their own placenta and their own circulatory system but share some vessels between each other. Throughout the pregnancy whole blood is transfused via these shared vessels back and forth between the two babies. So, though each child has its own circulatory system (just as does a mother and her child) in the case of DMT they actually transfuse whole blood back and forth throughout the pregnancy. Of course, when whole blood is transfused between a mother and her unborn (as does sometime occur) this could cause death because of rejection of foreign tissue. But the blood of these twins is identical because they are identical twins; therefore the blood transfused back and forth does not usually cause problems because it is perfectly matched just as creation would have it...Therefore with DMT babies we have in creation a perfectly healthy and naturally occurring instance of whole blood transfusion in the 85% of occurrences of DMT cases where there is no TTTS. If we follow your premise that blood parts transferring naturally according to Jehovah’s creation are maybe not “blood” that we must abstain from since this process is naturally occurring, then we must conclude that transfusion of whole blood is maybe not “blood” that we must abstain from because we see it occurring naturally in cases of DMT babies.<

There are several valid reasons why this cannot be considered a parallel to anti-bodies/fractions being passed from a mother to her baby. First, we are actually looking at essentially **one** circulatory system not two as you assert. The blood is not removed from one and introduced into a foreign blood stream, but “naturally” belongs to both twins. There is no interruption of the corporeal circulation in utero. This being the case, we do not have a parallel to fractions being passed between two disparate systems. This, then, can not be used to override or

modify God's command to abstain from blood, which when **removed** from its body can only be used for sacrifice or poured on the ground. Therefore your example is not relevant.

As you note, even the DNA is identical in identical twins' blood as well as all inherited substances. The fact that problems occur whenever major components of blood are passed from mother to fetus only reinforces the decision to include major components in the Scriptural ban while fractions may be reasonably excluded.

Since the above is true this second reason is largely unnecessary, but still reinforces the lack of parallel in our examples. The question is whether DMT are a "normal part of God's creation, or rather a defect. I think it can be argued that a "normal" twin pregnancy would be when the egg separates early (by 3rd day) and both fetuses have separate amnions and chorions. In this view, a shared chorion would be considered a departure from creative design and the result of imperfection similar to the mingling of mother and baby's blood. Lending sound evidence for this is the fact that progressively later (abnormal) separation of the egg leads to greater and greater physical abnormalities and risks culminating in conjoined twins (after the twelfth day). If this conclusion is correct, your example is definitely not parallel to the passing of fractions—an undeniable part of creative design. There are no increased risks with fraction transference like there is with shared vessels in DMT.

>[Shilmer]: Another argument you use has to do with the fact that the Mosaic Law did not allow any use of blood by Israelites. While I agree with that statement, details of the Mosaic Law on blood are not an automatic transfer to everyone else in God's eyes. (uw 148 par.6; 149 par. 8) Not to be forgotten is the initial record of Jehovah issuing a prohibition on blood as found in the Noachian Law. (Gen. 9) There is no biblical record that Noah or his descendants (other than Jews later on) had to abstain from using blood other than abstaining from eating blood of animals killed for food. (it1 344 par. 4; 345 par. 6).<

First, your limiting of the Noachian mandate to only animals which were killed is unscriptural and illogical. Second, there doesn't have to be any further record. One statement was enough and was clearly stated and understandable as it was written—both human and animal blood was sacred. There is absolutely no record that Noah's descendants ever felt they could use blood in other ways. So your conclusion is unscriptural, based only on **your** speculation.

Like a doctor looking only at the symptom and missing the cause, anyone trying to use the "only from animals used for food" argument is missing, or distracting, from the real point. That is, **why** the ban on eating blood was given. Since blood was "life" it was sacred and thus only God's. When a person keeps in mind the basic God given principle that blood is sacred, there is no need for explicit statements banning each and every other use of blood. Recognition of the sacredness of blood would deter any non-sacred use. The Mosaic code only continued this ban and explicitly confirmed the extent of the ban.

Additionally, it is clear that while all animals were placed "in man's hand"—to be used as he wished—blood was expressly removed from this prerogative. Humans were not given the authority to use blood as they wished. All blood from living souls was to be considered sacred. Since both animal and human blood was included as sacred in the Noachian covenantal ban, there is no way a person could conclude that the sacredness of blood applied only to the blood of animals which were killed for food. The blood was the soul in both man and animal. The soul—the blood was only God's and the power to determine it's use was His only. Therefore, any use of blood by humans outside of God's expressed approval was unacceptable, whether it came from an animal killed for food or removed from a living one. Human blood would be held as even more sacred and not for general use! (The use of the plural pronoun, the generic Man and the explicit statements that it included all future humans make it clear that it was given perpetually to all humanity.)

Because of the all encompassing sacredness of blood as "life" and it's being removed from man's control the burden is upon you to find some record of God's approval to use blood in any other way. Without evidence of the express approval of God for other uses you are clearly acting on your own opinion. On the other hand, the Mosaic Law given by God serves to Scripturally verify this conclusion extending the Noachian mandate to mean total non-use of **all** blood.

While, your comment about details of the Mosaic Law not necessarily being transferred is factually correct it is misapplied here. It ignores the fact that the Mosaic Law only perpetuated the previous ban based on the same sacred principle "life is in the blood." (Cf. Deut.12:23 w/ Gen.9:4-5). The "pouring it on the ground" and its "use

in sacrifices” is only stating a fact that was already obvious to Noah’s descendants. Then, the Apostolic Decree simply continued the same ban, even explicitly referring to the Mosaic code as explaining its application (Ac.15:20,21)!

The connection of the Apostolic decree to the Noachian code is also soundly evidenced. In their examination of what was required from the Mosaic Law, they came up with these “necessary things.” The only reason I can see for this determination is that they predated the Law, which, involving blood was the covenant given Noah.

>[Shilmer]: Also not to be forgotten is that God himself set the standard of using animal parts for practical uses, like clothing for the body. (Gen. 3:21) So for all we know from Adam onward humans may have used blood for some practical uses just as they probably did with other portions of an animal’s dead body...<

An irrelevant argument, then an ignoring of Scriptural fact concerning the sacredness of blood, then pure speculation unsupported by anything in Scripture! The first record of God’s view on blood showed blood was sacred. It said humans could use animals for food, clothes and etc. But, he expressly excluded blood from being given “into man’s hands” i.e., for his use. This is the information God gave us and we are bound to it, not to speculation on whether Adam was given explicit instructions on it.

>[Shilmer]: The problem with trying to tie the Mosaic Law to the Christian Apostolic Decree to abstain from blood is this: 1) The Apostolic Decree only tells us to abstain from blood and things strangled.<

I see no Scriptural nor logical problem with viewing this as a **continuous** law given to God’s people from the time of Noah to present. The issue in Acts 15 was concerning the Mosaic Law and the decree continued three of these laws on the explicit basis that they had been part of the Mosaic Law (Ac.15:20-21). Not surprising these also were all required prior to Moses which no doubt helped determine what was universally required. To “abstain from blood” would accurately convey the total prohibition inherent in the Noachian and Mosaic mandates.

>[Shilmer]: 2) From the Bible record we can say that Noah had to “abstain from blood.” But Noah did not have to completely abstain from blood as if God had prohibited any other use of it other than eating the blood of animals killed for food.<

Other than your personal opinion, do you have any **Scriptural** evidence for this conclusion? Is there any indication anywhere in the Bible that pre-exodus humans made use of blood in any way? The very absence of any record in God’s word of other uses of blood is revealing! As outlined above, **every** Scriptural statement connected with the mandate given to Noah indicates that all blood was sacred and not given to man to use. Every time God makes any statement concerning blood it is presented as something which humans have no right to put to personal use except with God’s express approval.

>[Shilmer]: 3) From the Bible record we can also say that Jews from Moses time onward had to “abstain from blood,” but in God’s eyes to a greater degree than anyone else. Jews had to completely abstain from blood because, as you correctly assert, they had to pour out blood that they were not using in atonement sacrifices. For Jews God had required a special, sacred use for blood and he therefore required that Jews treat blood as sacred by not using it for anything other than the sacred sacrifices he required of them. (Lev. 17:11,12)<

Only speculation can lead you to think the Jews had to abstain from blood to a “greater degree,” or that it was made more sacred to them. You see the statement that they must “pour it on the ground” and their blood sacrifices to be new developments. Though now codified, I see them only as an obvious and direct continuation of blood sacrifices and of obedience to the Noachian mandate. The fact is, that the **reason** Jews had to “abstain from blood” was because “life was in the blood” (Lev.17:10), exactly the same reason Noah was to abstain from blood (Deut.12:23; Gen.9:4-5). So, scripturally, there is no way to separate the Noachian and Mosaic mandates, or to see a change in the sacredness or use of blood. From Abel’s sacrifice to the Apostolic Decree, every Scriptural mention of blood use places it in exactly the same sacred position. Added features of the Law code changed nothing in regard to sacredness or how blood was disposed of or used.

Even granting your speculation on this would not help your view, since, if anything, the Apostolic Decree not

only reflects, but seemingly “intensifies” both the previous mandates. From association with “food,” to stressing the sacredness by requiring a complete unqualified “abstaining” with no stated verb. For the Christian then, it still would mean absolutely no personal use of blood which goes contrary to God’s view of it as sacred.

>[Shilmer]: Since the Apostolic Decree only says to abstain from blood (and things strangled) then how are we to know for sure if this prohibition applies as it did to Noah who was not under the Mosaic Law or to Jews who were under the Mosaic Law? Unless we can prove that the Christian Apostolic Decree puts us under provisions of the Mosaic Law related to blood abstention then we cannot successfully argue that the Apostolic Decree is anything more than a reiteration of the Noachian Law as it relates to blood abstention. None of your arguments have done this.<

I think there is a lot of nonsense in this paragraph perpetuated by an acceptance of your speculation and avoidance of seeing the clear and perpetual Scriptural reasons for the ban on blood use. I don’t think the all encompassing words “abstain from blood” are hard to understand when the unity of Scripture is respected. The connection between the Noachian, Mosaic and Apostolic law is obvious. Each reiteration of God’s view inherently contained the same clear message placing us under the same provision as the Mosaic and Noachian laws: “Life is in the blood.” Thus it is sacred to God and not for humans to determine its use. For every period God’s people would be able to use God’s sacred view of “blood/life” to accurately determine the laws application to any prevalent use of blood.

In the following arguments, your reasoning is deteriorating to the point of ridiculousness.

>[Shilmer]: I too have read your comments to the effect that the Apostolic Decree does “not include a limitation to “eating,” but seems to be an all encompassing command to “avoid blood.”” Like so many others you consistently draw a comparison between the decree to abstain from blood being as weighty as that to abstain from fornication, as though they are both as categorical. Is this true? Historically Christians can watch, feel of or think about blood without any recrimination. On the other hand, Christians should not watch, feel of or think about fornication. So the two abstentions are not perfect parallels...Therefore your assertion that the Apostolic Decree does “not include a limitation to “eating,” but seems to be an all encompassing command to “avoid blood” is not evidenced unless you would assert that Christian should abstain from watching blood, feeling of blood, thinking about blood, et al. Would you assert such a thing? Could you prove such an assertion?<

The comparison with fornication and idolatry is not from us, but is explicit in the Scripture. Yes, in regard to the things **referenced** here, the **abstentions** are equally categorical and perfect parallels. Let’s be reasonable and stick to what is here referenced. The mandate to “avoid blood, things strangled, idolatry and fornication” reveals that all references are equally displeasing to God. The context obviously is dealing with what is **displeasing** to Jehovah. The decree to abstain from improper use of blood is as weighty as that of fornication or idolatry! What makes you think we can think about anything displeasing to God “without recrimination?”

Separated from it’s roots in the Noachian and Mosaic Law certainly would make this decreed nonsensical and beyond understanding. But, that is what those who wish to sidestep doctrine always attempt to do: foist some vagueness into the Scriptures and then they can feel free to interpret it as they wish.

Just because there are some sanctioned uses of blood as opposed to any practice of fornication is irrelevant to the issue. It is only logical to exclude those uses or thoughts which are sanctioned by God. It is not logical to reason that because there are some valid uses for blood we can presume to lessen the prohibition and arbitrarily invent our own uses. We do not modify the prohibition on blood without clear evidence indicating God’s will on the matter.

We can also “think of fornication” in reasoning on it’s terrible consequences. But, we cannot use the excuse that because we can thus qualify the “abstain from fornication” mandate it is less binding. That would be unreasonable and so is your reasoning concerning the command to abstain from blood.

Your argument here is an unreasonable and illogical attempt to support your desired understanding. Your failure to see what is meant in the “abstain from blood” is a result of your improperly parsing the Scriptures detailing God’s view of blood and it’s accepted use. Since blood is sacred, we must avoid any use which is not somehow expressly sanctioned by God.

>[Shilmer]: By now you must think I am trying to pick on you, but this is not the case. Like any other serious subject, I research as thoroughly as possible. I have read so much on this subject, which has resulted in concerns I have raised that you are familiar with. Lately I found and recognized that you have ability to draw conclusions based on sound argumentation, so I spent some time to see if you had applied yourself to the subject of the Society's doctrinal position on blood and offered reasoning that was helpful. I found what is addressed in this letter.<

I do not feel "picked on" nor do I have any problem with this type of discussions. What I do feel is that there is something blocking your ability, or desire, to use the sacredness of blood principle in discerning God's will regarding blood. As a course of **will** you seem to be strenuously jumping through hoops in order to find some reason to ignore the mandate against blood and its modern application.

>[Shilmer]: You may not believe this, ...I also have deep brotherly affection for our brotherhood.<

I already have made it clear what I feel regarding your "love" for our brotherhood. One who has real love for the brotherhood would not publicly air his personal views which are contrary to the decisions made by the manifest authority God has placed in the position of keeping the congregation doctrinally pure. One who had real love would not allow his words to be posted on apostate sites to undermine confidence in that true congregation.

>[Shilmer]: I ask for help on the subject I have addressed here with considerable time.<

I respect your questioning and searching for personal answers. The problem is not in seeking answers, but how we do it and whether we accept the evidence. I have no problem with discussing this subject with anyone.

You would not have earned my denunciation if you had privately approached others qualified to answer your personal doubts. You would not have earned my censure if you had even remained unconvinced, while continuing to humbly serve and work in supporting God's congregation.

I apologize for the time it took to respond, however my time is limited and as I indicated initially I had prior e-mail discussions, more important priorities in family, congregation and full-time ministry. Don't take it too personal, I also have not had time to post on GreekTheology or Touchstone. Today I've caught up with two other overdue e-mail discussions and hopefully will get to a third. So, maybe things will slow down.

Yours,

Ron Rhoades

From: Marvin Shilmer to Ron Rhoades

Date: Sat, 27 Apr 2002 13:03 EST

Dear Brother Rhodes,

Thanks very much for your reply.

On the subject of blood there are two separate concerns.

1. Is there sound scriptural reasoning to make the distinctions we do between forms of blood parts like platelets and hemoglobin?
2. Does the Apostolic Decree prohibit today's medical uses of donor blood?

I reiterate these are separate and distinct questions.

My view is that Christians are bound to obey the Decree of Acts 15 to abstain from blood. Exactly what that entails is therefore important to understand and build conviction in. My conscience insists on sound affirmative answers to both questions above or, as a matter of godly loyalty, else it cannot abide by the Society's doctrinal position. Make no mistake about my motives—for me godly loyalty rises above any other, including brotherly loyalty. (Matt. 10:37)

In your reply to me you offered a premise that there is a sound scriptural distinction between using parts of blood based on whether they fall into the category of "food." But this premise fails later in your comments where you also assert that blood "can only be used for sacrifice or poured on the ground." For a fact Christians could not use any part of blood if, as you say, they abided by the tenet that blood "can only be used for sacrifice or poured on the ground."

Another problem with your premise of a distinction of "food" is this: blood parts like albumin will serve as food if taken into the digestive tract, which is the ultimate test of whether an item is "food" or not. Since blood parts like albumin are food then your premise of "food" fails to soundly make the distinction you would assert, because our doctrinal position allows accepting parts like albumin. Do you have evidence to the contrary along with proof of your assertion that "there is logical and scientific evidence that fractions do not fall under the category of "food"?"

You might be thinking of a distinction between intravenous uses versus ingestion into the digestive tract, asserting that when parts like albumin are taken intravenously they do not act as food to the body. Assuming this true, then it must be pointed out that the same can be said of some uses of parts like platelets too. Therefore, even in this case (not that you have or would assert it) the distinction we make is not established scripturally.

Another problem with the distinction of "food" is your later dependence on what you refer to as the "sacredness of blood." If "sacredness of blood" is the issue then whether a part of blood is "food" or not would become irrelevant. On the other hand if whether a part of blood must be abstained from depends on whether it is "food" then "sacredness of blood" is not the overriding tenet you assert.

Assuming "sacredness of blood" as the paramount issue then the question we have to ask ourselves is: does God view some parts taken from blood as less sacred than other parts so that some parts we must abstain from whereas other parts we might not have to abstain from? If yes, such a position would have us concluding that some parts of blood are less than sacred so we can use them regardless of the fact that they serve as "food" or that it came from something God said not to use except for sacrifices. I find no scriptural reasoning for such a position myself, or in your reply. Frankly, such a position appears utterly and thoroughly contradictive and inconsistent to me.

As to the distinction you would have us draw from what goes on in the natural setting, the convenience you allow yourself to so easily dismiss one instance as natural and another as unnatural demonstrates why this is not a sound way to deduce what our Father meant by decrees issues only to humans. Frankly, if we want to look at

what goes on in the natural setting then we must also answer for all the instances where God's creation apparently eats blood of dead carcasses all the time. Vultures would be a macro example and microbes on the micro scale. If we accept these as natural (which you may or may not, I don't know) then we would have to answer for why our doctrinal position differs from it. Our discussion is far better off to stay in the written word of God, for there is where we find His requirements for us.

Regarding the decree to Noah and the Mosaic Law, you make a lot of assertions I see serious problems with.

Here is one:

“There is absolutely no record that Noah's descendants ever felt they could use blood in other ways.”

Deuteronomy 14:21 contradicts that assertion. That text evidences some of Noah's descendants ate animal bodies that had not been thoroughly bled because they had died of themselves and thus could not be thoroughly bled. This is using blood by eating it, and descendants of Noah were doing the eating.

Some people (you might be one) believe Deuteronomy 14:21 is contradictory to Genesis 9 so they rationalize that Deuteronomy 14:21 must be some sort of exception made by God for “unbelievers.” Besides the gross assumption that all people outside the Mosaic Law were unbelievers, the underpinning of that reasoning begins with the assumption of contradiction with Genesis 9. I don't see this contradiction because, unless I read a predetermined interpretation into the text, I see nothing in Genesis 9 that talks about eating flesh that had died of its own. Regarding the prohibition of verse 4, the text in Genesis is talking about Noah killing animals for food (i.e., “Every moving animal that is alive may serve as food for you”). If you feel otherwise then please prove it from what the text actually says.

Here is another questionable assertion:

“Like a doctor looking only at the symptom and missing the cause, anyone trying to use the "only from animals used for food" argument is missing, or distracting, from the real point. That is, *why* the ban on eating blood was given. Since blood was "life" it was sacred and thus only God's. When a person keeps in mind the basic God given principle that blood is sacred, there is no need for explicit statements banning each and every other use of blood. Recognition of the sacredness of blood would deter any non-sacred use. The Mosaic code only continued this ban and explicitly confirmed the extent of the ban.”

This assertion assumes a reason for why God issued Noah the prohibition He did. The assumption is that “blood is sacred.” The problem with that assumption is that nothing in God's words to Noah requires that blood be treated as sacred. Noah could have used blood for a host of inconsiderate uses without eating it, and he would not have disobeyed God, and disobedience is the key factor at the end of the day when it comes to a prohibition. Your assertion depends on you first reading your own thinking into the text, which makes the assertion less than persuasive.

Here is another questionable assertion:

“While, your comment about details of the Mosaic Law not necessarily being transferred is factually correct it is misapplied here. It ignores the fact that the Mosaic Law only perpetuated the previous ban based on the same sacred principle "life is in the blood." (Cf. Deut.12:23 w/Gen.9:4-5). The "pouring it on the ground" and its "use in sacrifices" is only stating a fact that was already obvious to Noah's descendants. Then, the Apostolic Decree simply continued the same ban, even explicitly referring to the Mosaic code as explaining its application (Ac.15:20,21)!”

This assertion omits an important piece of information regarding why the Mosaic Law prohibited any use of blood (by mandating that blood must be poured on the ground). Leviticus 17:11 says the basis for the Mosaic prohibitions included the fact that God had, under that Law, named and required blood for use in sacred atonement sacrifices. Since God had not named or required this special use of blood to Noah then connecting the Mosaic prohibitions to that issued to Noah as though they are the same and for the exact same reasons is false. This together with the fact that later in the Mosaic Law Jehovah made provision for unbled animal carcasses that died of themselves to be given or sold for food to Noah's descendants outside requirements of the Mosaic Law

only strengthen the argument that the two laws (Noachian and Mosaic) are not completely parallel (not that they are contradictory). For a fact there is nothing explicit in the text of Genesis or later texts that indicate Noah understood he had to abstain from blood to the point of pouring it out without using it at all for any purpose, but that is not true of Israel under the Mosaic Law. Instructions to Israel made any use of blood aside from atonement sacrifices an act of disobedience.

I appreciate your willingness to help with my concerns on the subject we've undertaken. Take whatever time you need to reply. I don't want to be a burden. Thanks again!

Your brother,

Marvin

From: Ron Rhoades to Marvin Shilmer

Date: Sat, 25 May 2002 3:56 EST

Marvin,

(Please note the new e-mail address)

You wrote:

>[MS]: On the subject of blood there are two separate concerns. I reiterate these are separate and distinct questions: 1. Is there sound scriptural reasoning to make the distinctions we do between forms of blood parts like platelets and hemoglobin? 2. Does the Apostolic Decree prohibit today's medical uses of donor blood?<

You are right that these are separate and distinct questions. Number one "concern" is irrelevant to your position since either way it is answered it lends no support to the use of blood in transfusions.

If the answer to #2 is "no" then #1 is irrelevant. If #2 is yes then #1 is only relevant to those who feel that they should not use *any* part of blood, including fractions. On the other hand, if #1 is answered in the negative it would destroy your position and if answered in the positive it's irrelevant for your position.

>[MS]: 1. Is there sound scriptural reasoning to make the distinctions we do between forms of blood parts like platelets and hemoglobin?<

Why is this a "concern?" There is no doctrinal ruling against your using fractions so it has no bearing on deciding your real issue, which is contesting the application of the scriptural ban on blood to modern transfusions. This is either an irrelevant or a self-defeating issue for someone who wishes to argue for using blood in transfusions. So it actually is illogical for you to raise this issue. If there is evidence of a distinction, your argument is needlessly weakened since you are proved wrong on a point you unnecessarily raised. If there is no distinction your position is destroyed since this would mean that *scripturally* no part of blood could be used at all.

If you don't feel that the scriptural ban applies to blood transfusions at all then why question the Society's allowance of fractions? You have no problem using fractions, so simply present your Scriptural evidence to prove that blood transfusions are not included in the Scriptural ban on blood. Yet, I have seen absolutely no *scriptural* evidence from you to support your position. Rather, all I see is an attempt to muddy the waters by means of personal speculations and doubts.

If someone wants a direct and explicit Scripture statement on distinctions between blood parts they will not find it. This has always been the Society's position and is, in fact, the reason they realize there can be no doctrinal ruling either way on fractions. The issue over fractions arises due to modern scientific knowledge where we can not only identify fractions, but we can also see that Jehovah approvingly allowed fractions to pass from one human blood stream to another. These scientific facts cannot be ignored and so we must limit our doctrine and allow individuals to decide on fractions.

As I pointed out in my first post, what is clear is that Scripture explicitly teaches that we should "abstain from [eating] blood." From a strict scriptural view, this includes *all* parts of blood derived from either living or dead creatures. Therefore, since Scriptures do not make a distinction between blood parts, a strict reliance on explicit Scriptural statements would destroy any argument advocating the use of blood. The use of blood in transfusions is obviously contrary to the specific scriptural command to not eat blood. The Scriptures never limited this abstention to only blood from dead creatures.

I see the demand for an *explicit* scriptural statement concerning fractions to simply be a self-serving distraction. It distracts from the explicit statements of Scripture to abstain from blood and the clear distinction made by God himself when he allowed fractions to pass between mother and baby. Doubt about fractions is no

excuse to avoid God's law pertaining to blood. Nor can it be used to cast doubt on Witnesses' position since we refrain from making a doctrinal ruling on fractions.

Coupling the issue of fractions with an advocating of the use of blood in transfusions is a deceptive attempt to weaken the Society's doctrinal position. It is also false to imply that Witnesses' stand on fractions is a doctrine. This deceptive argument seems to say: "Since the Society does not have *explicit* Scripture support for their distinguishing fractions from major components then they must not have Scriptural support for their doctrine to avoid blood. This is a logical fallacy. It's like arguing that since we don't have an explicit Scripture mentioning guns then we don't have Scriptural support for condemning someone who kills with a gun.

>[MS]: 2. Does the Apostolic Decree prohibit today's medical uses of donor blood? My view is that Christians are bound to obey the Decree of Acts 15 to abstain from blood. Exactly what that entails is therefore important to understand and build conviction in. My conscience insists on sound affirmative answers to both questions above or, as a matter of godly loyalty, else it cannot abide by the Society's doctrinal position.<

Again, the Society does not make a doctrinal ruling on fractions. So when it comes to question number one your conscience is completely unaffected by the Society's position.

However, you have been given "sound affirmative answers" from Scripture which conclusively show that blood transfusions violate God's law to avoid blood. These reasons are, first, the foundational principle that blood in living creatures "is life" and thus incontestably sacred. Second, that God never gave humans the prerogative to use blood. Third, eating blood is explicitly condemned. And fourth, that every use of blood by humans had to be expressly approved by God. All of these are clearly shown in every Scripture dealing with the use of blood.

On the other hand, you must add to Scripture by forcing personal speculation into what was said. You speculate that faithful humans *must have* used blood for other purposes before the Mosaic Law. You speculate that the prohibition was limited to blood from animals killed for food. You give us your personal viewpoint that the Apostolic Decree *must be* less restrictive than the Mosaic Law. Ignoring the above explicit principles you demand an explicit "thou shalt not" denying every possible use of blood. What an unreasonable lack of spiritual thinking.

You have absolutely no scriptural evidence to support these assertions. Only by ignoring explicit statements of scripture and resorting to personal speculation can one limit the prohibition to blood from creatures killed for food. Scripturally, the blood in *living* creatures was sacred since the "soul" was in it. The animal's dying didn't make it sacred. Blood in living souls is sacred and belongs only to God. Thus sustaining life by eating blood from either living or dead animals is contrary to God's explicit statements concerning the sanctity of blood.

>[MS]: In your reply to me you offered a premise that there is a sound scriptural distinction between using parts of blood based on whether they fall into the category of "food." But this premise fails later in your comments where you also assert that blood "can only be used for sacrifice or poured on the ground." For a fact Christians could not use any part of blood if, as you say, they abided by the tenet that blood "can only be used for sacrifice or poured on the ground."<

You seem to be prematurely jumping to a conclusion here. Whether my argument fails or not depends on whether we conclude that fractions are "food" and thus included in the prohibition, right?

I did not offer the "food" category as a "premise." My actual "premise" was that God does not include fractions in the blood prohibition since He made use of them Himself. I then offered as implicit support from Scripture the category of "food." You, however, have given us no sound argument supporting your view that there is no distinction. Therefore, our distinction does not fail because we have sound evidence that fractions were not included in the command to pour it out. When you come up with sound evidence that they are included, then you may say that the "food" distinction fails. Of course, then you would also have proved that we couldn't use *any* blood, which in turn would destroy your own position allowing the use of blood in transfusions.

Since my position is that fractions are excluded from the prohibition and also do not seem to meet the qualifications as "food," the "food" distinction remains unaffected by the command to pour blood out. As I've

stated, this scriptural distinction as "food" is actually unneeded as evidence since we have God's expressed distinction when he approved the transference of fractions. As a secondary evidence this "food" distinction simply helps us to understand perhaps why God evidently did not include fractions in the ban.

If you want to argue whether fractions are "food" that's fine, our doctrine is unaffected. But primary components are obviously "blood," and definitely function as "food." Therefore, the doctrine banning their use is soundly derived from Scripture.

>[MS]: Another problem with your premise of a distinction of "food" is this: blood parts like albumin will serve as food if taken into the digestive tract, which is the ultimate test of whether an item is "food" or not. Since blood parts like albumin are food then your premise of "food" fails to soundly make the distinction you would assert, because our doctrinal position allows accepting parts like albumin. Do you have evidence to the contrary along with proof of your assertion that "there is logical and scientific evidence that fractions do not fall under the category of "food"?"<

First, I think you are using a selective and elementary school definition of "food" here. Second, how do you figure albumin serves as food? Lots of things will be taken into the digestive tract. But does that alone make something "food?" Even carbon particles from India ink will be "absorbed" into the blood stream when ingested orally. If taken into the digestive tract, many things will even be "digested." But this is *not* the "ultimate test of whether an item is food!" I believe that metabolism is the real indicator.

I question whether fractions really would dispense nutrients to build tissue through the digestive tract (anabolism), or be broken down any further in the digestive tract to supply energy (catabolism) which are required to be "food." Rather, from what I researched, it appears that they would simply be re-absorbed or eliminated as is the case with bilirubin when it is processed from red blood cells by the liver. Since albumin and other blood proteins are already the product of food digestion I doubt that they can properly be said to be "food" themselves. On the other hand, I don't believe there is any doubt that the four cellular components of blood will all function as "food" in the GI tract!

You offer me *your* definition of food, and then, proceeding as if you have proven that fractions are food, you confidently claim that my "premise" fails to support our distinctions. Don't you think you should offer some of the scientific evidence you demand from us?

According to several *complete* scientific definitions, at the very least "food" contains more than one nutrient and requires metabolizing. Others state that it must be a material designed to carry nutrients, give energy and build tissue. One described food as cellular material, though I haven't been able to find independent information, pro or con, for this. But, fractions are not cellular while the four major components are. (See Britannica, Oxford's Dictionary of Science and the On-line Medical Dictionary under Food, Diet, Nutrition).

From what I can tell, the biological function of fractions is not to provide nutrients nor to serve as nutrients themselves. While authorities may be divided on the minimum requirements for what constitutes "food," I think we are on safe and sound ground when we exclude fractions from the scriptural "food" category. Combining this with God's own use of fractions makes our "distinction" very well founded.

On the other hand, since every one of the major components would provide nutrients to build tissue or provide energy, there can be no argument with the fact that they fall under the "food" category and thus cannot be used in transfusions! The argument that fractions are food would only undermine any excuse to ingest *any* part of blood and thus would only strengthen the doctrine against blood transfusions. It would not weaken our doctrine since fractions are specifically excluded from any doctrinal stance.

>[MS]: You might be thinking of a distinction between intravenous uses versus ingestion into the digestive tract, asserting that when parts like albumin are taken intravenously they do not act as food to the body. Assuming this true, then it must be pointed out that the same can be said of some uses of parts like platelets too. Therefore, even in this case (not that you have or would assert it) the distinction we make is not established scripturally.<

Actually, platelets take an active part in building tissue. Like red and white cells they carry several substances which are released as needed to sustain life. Platelets disperse several growth factors (PDGF, TGF) which

stimulate tissue growth. Though without a nucleus they are still cellular in structure and are metabolic. So I believe this shows that there is a major biological distinction between fractions and platelets. Again, the distinction Witnesses make is established by God's use of fractions and supported by the scriptural "food" category."

>[MS]: Another problem with the distinction of "food" is your later dependence on what you refer to as the "sacredness of blood." If "sacredness of blood" is the issue then whether a part of blood is "food" or not would become irrelevant. On the other hand if whether a part of blood must be abstained from depends on whether it is "food" then "sacredness of blood" is not the overriding tenet you assert.

There is no problem here. "Sacredness" is the overriding principle, the reason, behind the "do not eat" application. The "do not eat" is just one application of the sacred principle and was explicitly stated since eating animals would be the primary contact with blood. You are partly correct in that the "food" category would be irrelevant IF we did not have the modern problem concerning fractions. Even now, support from the scriptural category of "food" is largely unnecessary since we have all the evidence necessary in God's own use of fractions. This use by God demands that we exclude fractions from our doctrinal stance.

>[MS]: Assuming "sacredness of blood" as the paramount issue then the question we have to ask ourselves is: does God view some parts taken from blood as less sacred than other parts so that some parts we must abstain from whereas other parts we might not have to abstain from? If yes, such a position would have us concluding that some parts of blood are less than sacred so we can use them regardless of the fact that they serve as "food" or that it came from something God said not to use except for sacrifices. I find no scriptural reasoning for such a position myself, or in your reply. Frankly, such a position appears utterly and thoroughly contradictory and inconsistent to me.

Your line of reasoning here is correct and separating parts would be a contradiction IF we were to arbitrarily decide this on our own. However, your personal failure to acknowledge evidence is irrelevant. The evidence from God's use of fractions and supportive evidence from scripture is there whether you see it or not. To all appearances, God Himself removed fractions from being considered "sacred." Your whole argument concerning fractions is founded on two things: First, an unreasonable demand for an explicit scriptural statement distinguishing parts of blood which were unknown in Bible times. Second, an ignoring of the evidence that God did in fact make such a distinction in creation. If God wants to see a distinction who are we to say it's contradictory?

>[MS]: As to the distinction you would have us draw from what goes on in the natural setting, the convenience you allow yourself to so easily dismiss one instance as natural and another as unnatural demonstrates why this is not a sound way to deduce what our Father meant by decrees issues only to humans.<

You have not responded to the evidence presented. Rather, you completely distract from the creative evidence and minimize the scientific evidence as simply a "convenient way for me to dismiss" your example. The soundness of a conclusion is weighed by it's alignment with the evidence. I have not simply offered you personal opinion for deciding what is natural or unnatural instances. I first gave you facts which soundly refuted your argument; Your example of blood transference in DMT is not parallel to the sharing of fractions by God in his creation. There is not *two* circulatory systems nor is the blood removed from it's natural owner. You did not address these primary facts, no doubt since it proves your example to be irrelevant while we still have the example confirming God's express approval to use fractions.

Since occurrence of DMT is not a parallel example, the conclusion that DMT is not a part of God's creative design, but rather a defect, is not necessary to my position. But DMT were "evidence" you improperly offered for your position. I presented the known fact that there is an increase of physical problems associated with DMT while there is absolutely none with the sharing of fractions between mother and fetus. Based on this fact, I believe that it is sound to conclude that DMT is an anomaly and not a "natural" part of creation. But, again, it is not even necessary for me to argue this point since your example is inapplicable to begin with.

The evidence that God did not include fractions in the prohibition on use of blood stands while there is absolutely no support for any use of major blood components.

>[MS]: Frankly, if we want to look at what goes on in the natural setting then we must also answer for all the instances where God's creation apparently eats blood of dead carcasses all the time. Vultures would be a macro example and microbes on the micro scale. If we accept these as natural (which you may or may not, I don't know) then we would have to answer for why our doctrinal position differs from it.<

Come on Marvin, can't you stay with relevant arguments? We are dealing with *humans* using blood not animals. God never banned animals from eating blood like he did with humans. Animals have no spiritual comprehension to fathom sacredness. God creating animals to eat blood has absolutely no relevancy to the question of whether He approves of humans doing so who should have spiritual comprehension. You must come up with some evidence that God *approves* of humans eating blood.

>[MS]: Our discussion is far better off to stay in the written word of God, for there is where we find His requirements for us.<

That is right, yet you have given us absolutely no Scriptural evidence that God approved of obedient humans using blood for any other purpose outside of sacrifices. And you insist on ignoring explicit statements in Scripture which rule out any mundane use of blood for true worshipers. On the other hand, though use of fractions is not part of Jehovah's written word we can legitimately use the testimony of creation as an extension of His word on the matter. ;)

>[MS]: Regarding the decree to Noah and the Mosaic Law, you make a lot of assertions I see serious problems with. Here is one: >>[RR]: "There is absolutely no record that Noah's descendants ever felt they could use blood in other ways."<<

>[MS]: Deuteronomy 14:21 contradicts that assertion. That text evidences some of Noah's descendants ate animal bodies that had not been thoroughly bled because they had died of themselves and thus could not be thoroughly bled. This is using blood by eating it, and descendants of Noah were doing the eating.<

I should have been more specific by saying that "there is absolutely no record that Noah's descendants ever had *God's approval* to use blood in other ways." The fact that unfaithful descendants of Noah lapsed into ignorance and used blood without consideration for God's laws does not support your position. The Noachian mandate still made it clear that blood was sacred and was not to be used. If it had been understood by Noah's faithful descendants that using blood for other purposes was OK then there would not have been a need for God to give this express exception to those who were obedient. Contrary to your position, this Scripture only gives evidence that the Mosaic code actually *relaxed* the Noachian mandate.

But, the context of our conversation is dealing with God's approval and with faithful worshipers who obey God's commands for mankind. We don't have to concern ourselves with God *allowing* the disobedient to go their way in ignorance. Directly pertinent to our discussion is the fact that Deut.14:21 is still proof that God did NOT ever approve of humans eating blood. This was true even if the animal had not been killed for food. If individuals wanted to be approved as His holy people they would not use blood. Additionally, this only proves that any exception to the command to abstain from blood had to be expressly approved by God. Faithful humans did not presume to see exceptions.

So again, do you have any Scriptural evidence that God *approved* of humans using blood for any mundane purpose? If not, the explicit statements in Scripture concerning the sanctity of blood rule out any other uses.

>[MS]: Some people (you might be one) believe Deuteronomy 14:21 is contradictory to Genesis 9 so they rationalize that Deuteronomy 14:21 must be some sort of exception made by God for "unbelievers."<

Witnesses do not see any contradiction between Deuteronomy and Genesis. Both show that blood is sacred and only God can decide how to use it. Both show that God gave only "living" animals to humans to kill for food. God clearly did enunciated an "exception" here which would benefit his people when, through no fault of their own, it was impossible to properly carry out the requirements of the law.

But, there was no "exception" concerning God's view of blood's sanctity. God simply allows non-believers to continue on their disobedient way without his interference (Acts 14:16; 17:29-30; Rom.3:25).

>[MS]: ...I don't see this contradiction because, unless I read a predetermined interpretation into the text, I see nothing in Genesis 9 that talks about eating flesh that had died of its own. Regarding the prohibition of verse 4, the text in Genesis is talking about Noah killing animals for food (i.e., "Every moving animal that is alive may serve as food for you"). If you feel otherwise then please prove it from what the text actually says.<

Actually, you **are** reading a predetermined interpretation into Scripture. Genesis 9 states clearly that God gave only "living" animals to humans to kill for food. I see nothing there that approves of eating blood from something that had died on its own. Do you see any Scripture that says it's OK if the animal died on its own? Or that it's OK to eat blood if it's separated from a still living body? Genesis 9 and its parallel scriptures explicitly state that: 1. As representative of life, all blood was sacred. 2. Humans were not given the prerogative to use blood. 3. Since this was so, humans were not to use blood for food regardless of where it came from.

It's impossible to avoid the conclusion that this meant blood was not to be used for any purpose by humans without God's express approval. There is absolutely no Scriptural text that limits the application of the law to only the blood of animals that had been killed. This must be forced into the scriptures by ignoring the governing principle: All living creatures' blood was sacred as it represented life and was not "given into the hand" of man. It was God's, and thus if no longer used by its own body it should only be given back to God.

If guilt resulted only if blood was from an animal killed by man, then God would not have forbidden Israelites to eat unbled flesh from animals that were not killed by men (Deut.14:21; Ex.22:31). God's people clearly knew the ban extended to animals which had died on their own (Ezek.4:14; 44:31).

>[MS]: Besides the gross assumption that all people outside the Mosaic Law were unbelievers...<

To the contrary, it is a gross mistake to believe that anyone outside of God's arrangement for salvation can be termed "believers" (Ac.15:6-7). Because of ignorance or rebellion the "nations" could not believe and were alienated from God unless they joined God's people by obeying the Law (Eph.4:17-18; 2:11-12,17). While in the past God "overlooked" the ignorance of those outside his arrangement and promises to "resurrect these unrighteous," they still cannot be termed "believers" (Ac.17:30; 24:15; Rom.9:22).

>[MS]: Here is another questionable assertion: >>[RR]: "Like a doctor looking only at the symptom and missing the cause, anyone trying to use the "only from animals used for food" argument is missing, or distracting, from the real point. That is, **why** the ban on eating blood was given. Since blood was "life" it was sacred and thus only God's. When a person keeps in mind the basic God given principle that blood is sacred, there is no need for explicit statements banning each and every other use of blood. Recognition of the sacredness of blood would deter any non-sacred use. The Mosaic code only continued this ban and explicitly confirmed the extent of the ban."<

>[MS]: This assertion assumes a reason for why God issued Noah the prohibition He did. The assumption is that "blood is sacred." The problem with that assumption is that nothing in God's words to Noah requires that blood be treated as sacred.<

There is no assumption regarding the reason God gave the prohibition. It is explicitly stated: the blood is the soul or life in God's eyes. You have blatantly ignored this explicit statement in order to sustain your presupposition. The statements in Deuteronomy and Leviticus unequivocally confirm that the reason was **because** blood represented life! (More on this below). Everything that is said in Scripture concerning blood places it in a sacred position!! It is "life," was never given to man and only used for sacrifices to God. If we don't see that as explicitly denoting sacredness we are truly blind, and perversely so.

>[MS]: Noah could have used blood for a host of inconsiderate uses without eating it, and he would not have disobeyed God, and disobedience is the key factor at then end of the day when it comes to a prohibition.<

And Joseph would not have been disobedient to God if he had committed fornication with Potiphar's wife, since

there was no specific statement condemning it. Right? We could kill people with a gun and never disobey the prohibition against murder since guns are never specifically mentioned in the Bible. Right?

You're not thinking or listening to what God has said concerning blood. Again, when a person keeps in mind the basic God-given principle that blood is sacred and was never given to man, there is no need for specific statements banning every use of blood that could ever arise. It is truly an act of gross disobedience to ignore God's expressed view of blood as sanctified.

This is the second time you have speculated that Noah could have used blood in other ways (a third time below). Again, other than your personal opinion, do you have any *Scriptural* evidence for this conclusion? Is there any indication anywhere in the Bible that *faithful* pre-exodus humans made use of blood in any way? Any evidence that God *approved* of any other use? The very absence of any record in God's Word of other uses of blood is revealing! As outlined above, *every* Scriptural statement connected with the mandate given to Noah indicates that all blood was sacred and not given to man to use. Every time God makes any statement concerning blood it is presented as something which humans have no right to put to personal use except with God's express approval.

I am not the one operating on an assumption. It is you. You have absolutely no scriptural evidence or logical reason to conclude that blood could be used by faithful humans for other mundane purposes. This is quite simply a baseless speculation on your part.

>[MS]: Here is another questionable assertion: >>[RR]: "...the Mosaic Law only perpetuated the previous ban based on the same sacred principle "life is in the blood." (Cf. Deut.12:23 w/Gen.9:4-5). The "pouring it on the ground" and its "use in sacrifices" is only stating a fact that was already obvious to Noah's descendants. Then, the Apostolic Decree simply continued the same ban, even explicitly referring to the Mosaic code as explaining its application (Ac.15:20,21)!"<

>[MS]: This assertion omits an important piece of information regarding why the Mosaic Law prohibited any use of blood (by mandating that blood must be poured on the ground). Leviticus 17:11 says the basis for the Mosaic prohibitions included the fact that God had, under that Law, named and required blood for use in sacred atonement sacrifices. Since God had not named or required this special use of blood to Noah then connecting the Mosaic prohibitions to that issued to Noah as though they are the same and for the exact same reasons is false.<

I have omitted no information. You distract from the evidence that the Apostolic Decree was a continuation of the way blood was treated under the Mosaic code. You are quite simply avoiding and distracting from the explicit reason given for the prohibition against blood use. Then you completely and self-servingly misconstrue the explicit statements of this Scripture! Leviticus 17:11 does NOT say or even imply that a "reason" or "basis for the Mosaic prohibitions" was because blood was now to be used in sacrifices.

Rather, Deuteronomy and Leviticus both explicitly, clearly and incontestably state that the *reason* blood was to be used in sacrifices was "*because*" it was life (the soul). The reason it was not to be eaten and poured on the ground was "*because*" of blood's sacredness as life.

Notice in Hebrew the conjunction KIY which is translated "for" and "because" in the NWT (Lev.17:11,14 [4x's]; Deut.12:23 [1x]). KIY is used to introduce the causal sentence or to explicate the basis for a statement (See BDB Lexicon, TWOT Strong's and Keil/Delitzsch). Therefore, these are explicit statements showing the *reason,* the *basis* for *why* blood was used on the altar and poured out. It is the *very same reason* that Noah was given the command not eat blood and why it was not given to man to use: Because it represented life! In Jehovah's eyes it was His only and thus sacred.

Your explanation for the reason and basis of the Mosaic prohibitions is false. It is totally unsupported by anything in Scripture and a complete denial and avoidance of the clearly stated reason for both the Noachian and Mosaic prohibitions.

>[MS]: This together with the fact that later in the Mosaic Law Jehovah made provision for unbled animal carcasses that died of themselves to be given or sold for food to Noah's descendants outside requirements of the Mosaic Law only strengthen the argument that the two laws (Noachian and Mosaic)

are not completely parallel (not that they are contradictory). For a fact there is nothing explicit in the text of Genesis or later texts that indicate Noah understood he had to abstain from blood to the point of pouring it out without using it at all for any purpose, but that is not true of Israel under the Mosaic Law. Instructions to Israel made any use of blood aside from atonement sacrifices an act of disobedience.<

The scriptural facts I presented should make it clear that the Noachian and Mosaic laws are fundamentally parallel. The same sacred principle was explicitly given as the basis for both. Eating blood was explicitly forbidden and nothing was said which would cause others to conclude that God approved eating blood of animals as long as they were not killed or had died on their own. Since there was no such allowance in the universal Noachian mandate it must be "read into" the Scriptures.

While the Mosaic law made the "pouring on the ground explicit," this was inherent in the Noachian mandate. While the Mosaic law demanded multiple sacrifices for specific reasons, blood sacrifices and covenants denoting life were offered from the time of Able. The Noachian mandate gave only "living" animals to humans for food while the Mosaic explicitly forbade eating animals that had died on their own. Fundamentally, what is not "parallel?" Focusing attention on irrelevant details in order to make a claim that they are "not completely parallel" does nothing to support your position. If anything, the concession God made allowing animal carcasses to be sold to those not worshiping Jehovah only made the Mosaic law *less* stringent than the Noachian.

It does not require an enforceable code before one can be disobedient to God. The Noachian mandate clearly showed that blood was sacred, it was not given to man and belonged to God. Any one who was cognizant of God's view would recognize that blood was not for mundane use. In fact, it could not be used at all unless God, as it's owner, gave his express approval. This being the case, it would be an act of disobedience for any offspring of Noah to presume to make personal use blood. Demanding an explicit "thou shalt not" for every possible use of blood is ridiculous and manifests a spiritual blindness.

Only by appealing to unfounded speculation and ignoring explicit scriptural statements could one presume that Noah put blood to mundane uses or that God approved of any such use by his descendants.

>[MS]: I appreciate your willingness to help with my concerns on the subject we've undertaken. Take whatever time you need to reply. I don't want to be a burden. Thanks again!<

Spring time is always a very busy time for me. But, this type of study is never a burden for me, it just takes a little longer for me to respond. :(

Yours,

Ron Rhoades

From: Marvin Shilmer to Ron Rhoades

Date: Sat, 25 May 2002 13:10 EST

Dear Brother Rhodes,

I appreciate your reply. Spring certainly is a busy time for us all. Conventions are just around the corner along with assignments for them, and field service usually gets a little more intense during the fair weather months.

There are some very basic differences in how we two seem to reach our conclusions, and in other cases I fear some misunderstanding. To me the differences are about fundamental points of logic and therefore unless they can be reconciled our discussion may end up in confusion. For purposes of me better understanding between us I think it would be better for us to focus first on what God required pre-Mosaic Law in terms of blood abstention. With this in mind I will proceed to explain a few fundamental problems I see and we will see where this takes us. My intent is only to find resolution on the subject of what God requires. The following paragraph of yours shows some of the logical problems I see.

You wrote:

“However, you have been given "sound affirmative answers" from Scripture which conclusively show that blood transfusions violate God's law to avoid blood. These reasons are, first, the foundational principle that blood in living creatures "is life" and thus incontestably sacred. Second, that God never gave humans the prerogative to use blood. Third, eating blood is explicitly condemned. And fourth, that every use of blood by humans had to be expressly approved by God. All of these are clearly shown in every Scripture dealing with the use of blood.”

When you write that “blood in living creatures “is life” and thus incontestably sacred” to me that is reading an opinion into the biblical text of Genesis 9 where for the first time Jehovah spoke of blood illustratively as life. I suppose it all depends on what you mean by “sacred,” but to me sacred means set apart as special by God so that we can only use it according to His explicit permission, and I don’t see this concept at work in the text of Genesis 9. All I see is God using the substance of blood illustratively for life. It works this way: Kill an animal and you cannot eat it’s blood. Kill a man and you’ll pay with your own blood (i.e., life). In both instance blood is used illustratively for life. In both instances life is the thing held out as sacred because in both cases it’s the taking of life that has a consequence. But as for the substance of blood itself, I see no inherent imputing of sacredness for at least two reasons. 1) Because other than eating the blood of animals KILLED for food I see no prohibition issued to Noah on him using the substance of blood and) because I see no consequences for use of blood like I do for killing (taking LIFE). Other than the one prohibited act of eating blood of animals killed for food, Noah could have used blood without disobeying Jehovah. For example, Noah could have used blood as a natural pigment for painting or adding color to clothes and this would NOT have been in any way violating God’s STATED prohibition, yet using blood for paint is hardly in line with use of a sacred object. So, unless we read sanctity into the text, how do explain that so many unsanctimonious uses of blood were left unprohibited for Noah? If God had wanted Noah to abstain from using blood for anything other than what He expressly approved then all He had to tell Noah was to pour blood out onto the ground. But that’s not what God told Noah.

If God’s words to Noah were centric to blood, as though God were declaring the substance blood sacred, then consequences would have been centric to misuse of blood, but they’re not. On the other hand the text contains explicit consequences for taking LIFE (i.e., KILLING) so we see then a centrality to LIFE. Therefore we can conclude the text of Genesis 9 has God declaring that life is sacred because taking life has a consequence.

Of course, we know that any disobedience to God is wrong and God did prohibit Noah from eating blood of animals he killed for food. Therefore we must assume a consequence had Noah eaten blood of animals he killed for food. We just don’t know what it would have been because God didn’t state it. Notwithstanding, it is critical to determine if God’s statement to Noah prohibited the eating of any and all blood (aside from residual blood left in meat) or just the blood of creatures killed for food. To avoid reading opinions into the text it is important to stick with what is actually written rather than inferences we want to draw. Unfortunately for us, inferences are notoriously unreliable.

When you write, “God never gave humans the prerogative to use blood,” I don’t understand why such a belief could evidence that blood transfusions violate God's law because it is fallacious to argue that the absence of permission proves a prohibition. Such an argument would have us conclude a prohibition because we CANNOT find an express permission. This would be a classic “argument from ignorance” because it would have us argue that something is TRUE because it hasn’t been proved FALSE. In my case I’m not arguing that God has okayed blood transfusions using donor blood I’ve simply said I see nothing in God’s requirements to Noah that prohibit it. Along these lines I believe each of the following truisms have relevance to our discussion:

1. Permission for one or many things does not create or imply a prohibition on anything.
2. The absence of permission does not create a prohibition. The absence of permission means no more than an individual must decide for themselves what to do, if anything.
3. Prohibition of one thing does not create permission for other things.
4. The absence of prohibition does not create or imply permission. The absence of prohibition means no more than an individual must decide for themselves what to do, if anything.
5. A prohibition of one thing does not imply permission is needed regarding unprohibited items or acts.

Then you write, “every use of blood by humans had to be expressly approved by God.” This statement really is confusing to me.

First, since our teachings and practices assert a prohibition, your statement defies a fundamental truism that the absence of permission does not create a prohibition. How do you support your assertion that “every use of blood by humans had to be expressly approved by God”? Remember that we are dealing with pre-Mosaic Law here. Once we have established God’s requirements within that frame then we will consider what came afterward, including whether anything changed.

Second, when blood banks and hematologists use blood for purposes of extracting portions to transfuse as “major” or “minor” parts this is in fact humans using blood in a way that God did not EXPRESSLY approve. So how this helps support what we teach escapes me. I would appreciate your clarification here.

To avoid any confusion about what I expect to have evidenced from the Bible on this subject, I am not looking for texts explicit to modern medical blood transfusions any more than I would expect to see reference to murder by gunshot. We know murder by gunshot is wrong because the Bible condemns murder. Therefore HOW murder is accomplished is beside the point of determining whether murder was committed. Regarding modern medical use of blood, biblical texts need only prove that using donor blood is prohibited. Then HOW donor blood is used would be beside the point of knowing whether a prohibited act had occurred. Alternately, regarding your assertions about sanctity of blood, biblical texts would have to prove that the substance of blood is sacred meaning that God restricts its use to only those EXPRESSLY approved by Him. In that case we’d then have to prove God’s EXPRESS permission for uses we tolerate.

Regarding pre-Mosaic Law elements to our discussion, you wrote:

“...blood sacrifices and covenants denoting life were offered from the time of Able.”

My question here is where does the Bible speak of blood sacrifices from the time of Abel so that you can assert as you have? We know Israel used blood in sacrifices because the Bible says they put blood upon the alter. But what scriptural proof is there that blood played any significant role in sacrifices from the time of Abel, if any role at all, so you can assert as you have? If you have in mind Abel’s sacrifice, I read that he made fatty pieces a part to his sacrifice, which also undoubtedly means an animal died for him to make this offering, but I see no mention of blood being party to his offering. Animals Abel used in sacrifice may or may not have contained their blood as a part to his sacrifice, the Bible does not say one way or another as though we should know or draw some inference from that. If blood had been an important element of Abel’s sacrifice the text surely could have pointed that out just as easily as it did the fact that he used “even their fatty pieces.” Do you have some other example in mind?

I don't want to get into provisions of the Mosaic Law until we've finished discussion of pre-Mosaic Law requirements, but we do apparently have some different perspective on that law too. As food for thought for our later discussion on the Mosaic Law I will go ahead and make the following statements.

1. The Mosaic Law set Israel apart from its neighbor nations, but this was not God setting Israel apart as the only worshippers He recognized as worshipping him throughout the globe we call earth. God setting Israel apart with provisions of the Mosaic Law was but one provision leading to the ultimate unification of persons wanting to worship Him from all nations of the earth. This is evidenced in the fact that the Mosaic Law had no requirements for proselytizing but Christianity does. (Matt. 24:14, 28:19, 20) In the time of Moses had living according to the Mosaic Law been the only worship God recognized from those wanting to worship Him their faithful forefathers had done then Jehovah would have made provision to proselytize them, but He did not.

2. Regarding blood, the text of Leviticus 17:11, 12 EXPRESSLY states TWO elements joined together as THE reason for WHY Jehovah stated higher requirements to Israel than He did to Noah. The two elements being 1) because of the already established metaphorical usage of blood for life and 2) because with the Mosaic Law God for the first time required blood to be used for sacred atonement sacrifices.

I am intimately familiar with all the responsibilities and constraints of getting prepared for our upcoming conventions. So take your time in getting back with me. I think the method of first undertaking a consideration of pre-Mosaic Law requirements should help reduce the amount of time either of us must spend on making sure of all things as it relates to our topic.

Your brother,

Marvin

From: Ron Rhoades to Marvin Shilmer

Date: Wed, 14 Aug 2002 16:37 EST

Marvin,

Sorry about the delay. Summer is a very busy time for me. I am sending my response following this note. If you do not receive it, due to the size, please let me know and I will break in up into several parts.

Ron

From: Ron Rhoades to Marvin Shilmer

Date: Wed, 14 Aug 2002 16:38 EST

Marvin,

Sorry about the delay. Summer is a very busy time for me. I am looking forward to your carefully considered response to the points presented here. I am also sending you a summation outlining what I consider the important issues.

>[You wrote]: There are some very basic differences in how we two seem to reach our conclusions...To me the differences are about fundamental points of logic...I think it would be better for us to focus first on what God required pre-Mosaic Law in terms of blood abstention.<

We have discussed the requirements inherent in the Noachian mandate. You simply have chosen to avoid the ramifications of God viewing all blood in living creatures as equated with life and belonging only to Him. And you distract from the simple fact that no matter how much you try to avoid it, transfusions are clearly contrary to the explicit Noachian and Mosaic command to "not eat blood" and the Apostolic Decree's command to "abstain from blood."

In a weak attempt to maintain your own interpretation you must avoid examining the Noachian, Mosaic and Apostolic decrees together. Because, considered together these scriptures would reveal that all were based on the same controlling principle and would thus absolutely prove that Scripture always presents blood in living creatures as sacred and thus is not for human use.

Your argument has continued on the standard course taken by all who want to weaken Scriptural teachings. You present "evidence" and arguments to support your position. You ignore, distract from and fail to adequately respond to evidence disproving your evidence and arguments. Parsing the Scriptures, you search for and retreat to the least explicit Scripture which is thus more open to forcing a wrong interpretation into it.

>[MS]: The following paragraph of yours shows some of the logical problems I see. You wrote:

>>[Ron]: "However, you have been given "sound affirmative answers" from Scripture which conclusively show that blood transfusions violate God's law to avoid blood. These reasons are, first, the foundational principle that blood in living creatures "is life" and thus incontestably sacred. Second, that God never gave humans the prerogative to use blood. Third, eating blood is explicitly condemned. And fourth, that every use of blood by humans had to be expressly approved by God. All of these are clearly shown in every Scripture dealing with the use of blood."<<

>[MS]: When you write that "blood in living creatures "is life" and thus incontestably sacred" to me that is reading an opinion into the biblical text of Genesis 9 where for the first time Jehovah spoke of blood illustratively as life. I suppose it all depends on what you mean by "sacred," but to me sacred means set apart as special by God so that we can only use it according to His explicit permission, and I don't see this concept at work in the text of Genesis 9. All I see is God using the substance of blood illustratively for life. It works this way: Kill an animal and you cannot eat it's blood. Kill a man and you'll pay with your own blood (i.e., life). In both instance blood is used illustratively for life.<

My definition of "sacred" is the same as your's.

Your argument does not support your position nor does it properly draw the logical conclusion from what is specifically said concerning the substance of blood itself. Scholars throughout history have had no problem seeing the sanctity of blood denoted here. It is obvious that the concept of sacredness is at work here for at least three reasons.

The fact that "blood" is sometimes used as a metaphor for "life" in no way denies its sanctity, but only confirms it. But, here in Genesis 9:4,5 "blood" denotes the literal substance. Blood is not used here as an "illustration" i.e.,

a metaphor for "life." Here the word "soul" denotes "life." Blood is used in apposition to life; "its life: its blood" or further separated in verse 5 as "blood of [in regard to] your life" or "blood [which sustains] your life." It is the literal blood itself which is spoken of by the word "blood" and was not to be eaten, not the "life principle." So, the fact that blood itself is equated with life and so is used as its representative actually emphasizes its sacredness. This is the explicit reason behind the Noachian prohibition as well as every other mention of blood in Scripture.

Another proof that the concept of sacredness is at work here is the fact that animal life belonged to God and while he gave their flesh to mankind blood explicitly was not given to man but is withheld, retained "apart" as God's.

Both animal and human blood is clearly presented here as belonging only to God and so was undeniably viewed as sacred. This is inherent in the Scripture and does not have to be "read into the text," nor is it *my* opinion. God is the one who retained ownership of blood, *equates* it with life and withholds it from "man's hand."

Smith's Bible Dictionary states: "To blood is ascribed in Scripture the mysterious sacredness which belongs to life, and God *reserved* it to himself when allowing man the dominion over and the use of the lower animals for food. Thus reserved, it acquires a double power...Ge 9:4; Le 7:26; 17:11-13."

>[MS]: In both instances life is the thing held out as sacred because in both cases it's the taking of life that has a consequence. But as for the substance of blood itself, I see no inherent imputing of sacredness for at least two reasons. 1) Because other than eating the blood of animals KILLED for food I see no prohibition issued to Noah on him using the substance of blood and 2) because I see no consequences for use of blood like I do for killing (taking LIFE).<

Humans had permission to take animal life and thus, contrary to what you state, it did not have "consequences" (Gen.3:21; 4:4; 8:20,21; 9:3). Since the command was against eating the substance itself, not the taking of a life, use of blood was the issue in this instance. Animal life was "given into mans hand" for his utilization as food, while blood was explicitly withheld for the reason that it was life. Therefore, in this instance blood itself was the thing "held out as sacred." Since the text then placed human blood as more sacred it obviously could not be eaten.

Further, neither of your two points here present any valid reason for not viewing blood as sacred. Neither overrules the fact that in this scripture blood is clearly sacred since it belongs only to God: it's equated with life and withheld from mankind. Your points actually have no bearing whatsoever on whether blood is sacred. They are simply distractions and an ignoring of the facts contained in this scripture as presented above.

1. You say "Other than eating blood..."? The prohibition against eating blood should be enough in itself to evidence that blood was sacred in God's eyes!!

In order to limit the prohibition to only blood from animals killed for food you must ignore the basis for the prohibition given as well as the fact that God clearly retained blood to himself. Further, there is absolutely nothing explicit in this scripture which limits the command to only eating blood from animals that had been killed. It is worthwhile to note that throughout history many interpreters understood these words to mean eating an animal while alive! It obviously applied to blood from killed animals, but as worded the command would also apply to eating any blood as food. The fact that blood *inside* living animals "was life" shows that blood from living donors is still sacred. So, the victim didn't have to be killed for the prohibition to apply.

Just because we do not see God specifically banning each and every possible use of blood by Noah or his descendants down through history does not argue against the fact that blood is presented as sacred. Since the principles were clearly stated, there was no need to enumerate further prohibitions. These principles would prohibit any mundane use for spiritually minded individuals. The complete witness of Scripture conclusively proves this conclusion to be correct since it always places blood in a sacred position, i.e., outside of human dominion or prerogative.

2. Similarly, the fact that there was no "consequences" directly stated for disobeying the ban on blood lends no support to the idea that blood was not sacred. The lack of a consequence being explicitly stated did not nullify the fact that we have a command to not eat blood nor does it diminish the fact that blood is presented as sacred.

Consequences of sin did not have to be repeated to validate each command or principle. The consequences of any disobedience to God were clearly understood by Adam's descendants: disfavor, rejection and even death (Gen. 2:17; 3:3; 4:7,14).

Again, according to this Scripture, God never placed blood "into man's hands," he withheld the blood as His own, and life was said to be the blood. The sacredness of blood could not be stated any clearer or stronger. It is hard to miss the fact that blood was explicitly retained as belonging only to God and thus could only be used "according to His permission." How someone could deny that the sacredness of blood is in view here is beyond comprehension, and contrary to "fundamental logic." This denial would certainly be a personal opinion and contrary to everything that is said in Scripture concerning blood.

>[MS]: Other than the one prohibited act of eating blood of animals killed for food, Noah could have used blood without disobeying Jehovah. For example, Noah could have used blood as a natural pigment for painting or adding color to clothes and this would NOT have been in any way violating God's STATED prohibition, yet using blood for paint is hardly in line with use of a sacred object.<

We have discussed your dogmatic and unscriptural assumption that Noah could have used blood for other uses without violating God's mandate. You have failed to support this speculation or to rebut evidence refuting such a view. The evidence already presented argues against your reasoning that it would have been acceptable to use blood for mundane purposes, or that the mandate only applied to blood from animals killed for food or that there needs to be a *specific* law for every imaginable use of blood before it's prohibited.

1.) Scripture explicitly states that the primary *reason* for the Noachian and Mosaic laws was the governing principle that in God's view the blood *while in* living creatures "is life," and when removed is to be treated as such. 2.) Blood was expressly withheld from man's hand, i.e., he was given no authority to personally use it. 3.) There is absolutely no Scriptural record of any mundane use by faithful servants. 4) Without exception, every mention in Scripture confirms the view that blood is sacred and could only be used with the express approval of God. 5.) Finally, the all encompassing Apostolic Decree was explicitly stated to be based on and explained by what was said about blood in the "Book of Moses."

Since you have failed to refute these Scriptural proofs of the sanctity of blood, your speculation that blood could have been used in mundane ways is without Scriptural support. Holding to this speculation amounts to a willful ignoring of God's view as taught by the whole of Scripture.

So again, do you have any Scriptural evidence that God *approved* of Noah or his descendants using blood for any mundane purpose? Do you see any Scripture which indicates that God *approved* of his people eating blood if the animal died on it's own? Or that it's OK to eat blood if it's separated from a still living body? Or that humans ever had the right to decide for themselves how to use blood. If not, the clear statements in Scripture verifying the sanctity of blood rule out mundane use and your opinion is simply a baseless speculation.

Your position that disobedience to God only can occur when there is a violation of an explicitly "stated prohibition" is unscriptural and wickedly misleading. This idea is soundly refuted by Scripture examples. It does not require a law specifying every possible infraction before one can be disobedient to God (see it-2 222-3). The nature of principles negates any such idea. Demanding an explicit "thou shalt not" for every possible use of blood is ridiculous and manifests a spiritual blindness (1Cor.2:14-16). Nor did God keep from punishing those who should have ascertained laws from principles (Rom.1:20). Did Christ and the apostles feel there had to be a specifically stated code and consequences before there was a law binding upon God's people? (Mt.19:3-9; 1Tim.2:11-14; 1Jn.3:11, 12; 1Cor.2:14-16). What was the specific commands and stated consequences broken by the people destroyed at the flood? What was the specific law and it's detailed consequences that Joseph was obeying so as not to "sin against God?" (Gen.2:24; 39:9).

>[MS]: If God's words to Noah were centric to blood, as though God were declaring the substance blood sacred, then consequences would have been centric to misuse of blood, but they're not. On the other hand the text contains explicit consequences for taking LIFE (i.e., KILLING) so we see then a centrality to LIFE.<

More logical fallacies and a distraction from the fact that God's command was were "centric" to eating blood. The prohibition was specifically directed against the use of blood itself, not just "life." You "read into" the text a

consequence for taking animal life when there was none. You assume that blood had to be the central issue for it to be sacred. You assume that there had to be consequences stated before something could be sacred. You assume that if life was the central issue then blood could not be sacred. These are all unsupported and self-serving personal opinions.

First, there is no need for blood to be the primary issue for it to be sacred. Therefore, even if we were to accept "life" as the primary issue, nothing in your argument refutes the clear Scriptural statements showing that blood was sacred. Whether you consider it the "central issue" or not has no relevancy since blood itself is spoken of here and is clearly presented as sacred. It does not follow that just because "life" is sacred this excludes its material representative from being sacred.

Second, your argument is flawed because there were no "consequences" whatsoever for taking animal life since there was no disobedience in this. So, in regards to animal life, the blood is the *only* issue addressed because blood, not life, was what God withheld from mankind. Killing animals was not prohibited and any "consequence" for taking an animal's life must be arbitrarily "read into" this scripture in an attempt to bolster your failing argument.

There certainly were consequences naturally associated with disobediently eating blood. From God's previous dealings with mankind humans knew the consequence of any disobedience was rejection and death.

Third, you improperly assume that the central issue was not concerning the substance blood. In both verses 3 and 4 God's words to Noah were centric to blood since it represented life. Several things show that blood itself continues to be the issue in verse 5. First we have the conjunction (W) combined with the emphatic AK tying what is said next to verse 4. This is followed by *blood* as the direct object (the following preposition and its object--life--modify blood). Then the last phrase finally addresses human life (NEPHESH), but in a way that further equates blood with life. Therefore, in verses 5,6 both human blood and the life it represented are the central issues (both the "blood of your life" and "man's soul" are God's). Therefore, the substance blood as well as what it represents are presented as sacred.

The mandate thus had to do with misuse of the substance blood. Animal blood was "life" and since it was not given to man eating it amounted to a "taking" of something that only belonged to God. Human blood was even more sacred (KA:W) and was not to be shed at all, let alone eaten. So we have animal blood, human blood and human life presented here as reserved to God only, i.e., sacred.

The sanctity of Life certainly is the underlying principle, but it is the material blood which is completely and eternally withheld from mankind's use. Therefore, I have no problem with the fact that "LIFE" was the *governing* principle in all the Scriptures dealing with the use of blood. The fact still remains that in Gen.9:4,5 it was the treatment of blood itself which was "central."

The equating of blood with life in Scripture gives us the reason blood was retained as only God's! Every Scriptural law and statement concerning the substance blood confirms this understanding that blood itself was sacred, belonging only to God and thus could be used only with his express approval.

>[MS]: Of course, we know that any disobedience to God is wrong and God did prohibit Noah from eating blood of animals he killed for food. Therefore we must assume a consequence had Noah eaten blood of animals he killed for food. We just don't know what it would have been because God didn't state it. Notwithstanding, it is critical to determine if God's statement to Noah prohibited the eating of any and all blood ... or just the blood of creatures killed for food. To avoid reading opinions into the text it is important to stick with what is actually written rather than inferences we want to draw. Unfortunately for us, inferences are notoriously unreliable.<

Your failure to know what the consequence would be if Noah had eaten blood derives from a neglect in drawing logical deductions from the whole of Scripture. As mentioned above humans always knew what the consequences of any specific sin were. This was due to their God given ability to draw valid deductions not only from principles behind laws but even from simple statements made by God which revealed His view.

Your failure to perceive the application of this prohibition to eating *any* blood stems from your habitual neglect in recognizing and acknowledging Godly principles. First, you fail to note what is actually written

concerning blood. And second, you stubbornly ignore that what was said revealed the controlling basis for the prohibition. What I have already presented shows that the principle reason for the prohibition against eating the blood of animals killed for food would also prohibit eating any blood whatsoever. The victim didn't have to be killed for the prohibition to apply since blood taken from living creatures was still sacred.

It is you who is drawing faulty inferences here. You draw the faulty inference that only blood from animals killed for food was prohibited because you ignore the above pertinent facts and principles. The law was specifically against eating blood and it gave no explicit limitation to only blood of killed animals. The controlling reason of blood being life would also prohibit eating blood from a living animal. While we know that the *immediate application* was to animals killed for food, there is absolutely nothing that limits the command to blood from dead animals. Any one who was cognizant of God's view, expressed in the principle reason given, would recognize that blood was not for mundane use.

However, we do not rely on inferences since we have clear confirmation of the correct understanding in the explicit statements of the Mosaic Law and Apostolic decree.(For instance, God's comments prohibiting the eating of blood from animals which had died on their own confirm that the Noachian law applied to eating all blood, not just from animals killed by humans. It was the blood being life which caused the prohibition, not the killing.)

As a side note, it is perfectly legitimate to use valid inferences to draw correct conclusions. Proper and valid inferences use all the facts and avoid assumptions or outright falsehoods.

In the above section, while offering a lot of irrelevant and distractive points, you have offered nothing which negates the clear Scriptural presentation of blood as sacred since it belongs only to God and represents life. This failure has largely rendered any of your further arguments as irrelevant. Now to the clear Scriptural teaching that God withheld blood from the hand of man.

>[MS]: When you write, "God never gave humans the prerogative to use blood," I don't understand why such a belief could evidence that blood transfusions violate God's law because it is fallacious to argue that the absence of permission proves a prohibition. Such an argument would have us conclude a prohibition because we CANNOT find an express permission.<

Your argument here is a distraction from the real argument and a straw man. You distract from the fact that blood transfusions are undeniably "eating" blood and thus are clearly prohibited by the specifically expressed prohibition to not eat blood. (They don't call it intravenous feeding for nothing).

My argument was not founded on an "absence of permission" but was based on an absence of human prerogative—they had no right to use blood. What we have here is a permission granted which was limited by a clear denial of permission. It wasn't just that there was no permission given, but rather, that there was a withholding of jurisdiction over part of something given to humans by God. Even the prerogative or the right to personally decide how to use blood was withheld from humans—blood was not "given" nor placed "into mans hands." God *retained* the rights to blood for Himself.

Therefore, besides the explicit prohibition against eating blood, what further evidences the prohibition against transfusions in this scripture is that blood was specifically excluded from being placed into man's control—it remained God's alone. Lack of mankind being "given" this *right* prohibits any human using blood without God's express approval. Additionally, when we are given principles which implicitly rule something out then we do not need an explicit prohibition.

Further, your dogmatic "rule" here does not hold up. Lack of permission may or may not "prove a prohibition." In fact my "Black's Law Dictionary" states: "Permission. A license to do a thing; an authority to do an act which, without such authority, would have been unlawful." Just try giving your argument to the cop who catches you "borrowing" your neighbor's car without permission!

So, you see, "lack of permission" can "prove" a prohibition, especially in the case of something which, by right, belongs to another or in things that by nature require the prior permission of a higher authority or sovereign. A good example is pre-flood humans recognizing a prohibition on eating animals since that right had never been given to mankind. In the case of blood use, without express permission we would be "presuming a right where

no right exists." Without delving deeply into deontic philosophy, in logic and legal thought it is very natural to think that whatever is not permitted is forbidden *when* we have recognized "norms" regulating actions.

According to your whole logic on the issue of blood, you would require a specific "thou shall not" for every individual thing owned by your neighbor before you would admit that stealing some specific thing was wrong.

In fact, the only case where your "rule" applies would be where we have a *complete* absence of any pertinent information (like God's view of using electricity, riding bicycles, etc.). Or legally put, "a *complete* silence of law" or social norms. But, this is not the case with the use of blood and so your "rule" does not apply here at all. We have the information that animals belonged to God and only He could give permission on how they may or may not be used. Placing animals "into man's hand," God "gave" to humans the permission and prerogative to use animals, but he withheld both prerogative and permission when it came to blood. Since, animals, and their blood, belonged only to Jehovah an absence of permission to use blood does denote a prohibition.

Again, this understanding is absolutely verified by every statement in Scripture concerning blood. This consensus of all scriptures concerning blood is what absolutely "proves" the prohibition. Every scripture shows that faithful humans recognized that use of blood was prohibited unless given God's express approval.

>[MS]: Along these lines I believe each of the following truisms have relevance to our discussion:<

Where did you get these "truisms." Did you do any research or analyze whether these are universally true? Seems to me that somebody is making up their own adages to support their position.

>[MS]: 1. Permission for one or many things does not create or imply a prohibition on anything.<

I would agree that permission does not "create" a prohibition since there must be a prohibition existing before the word "permission" could be used. But, this is irrelevant to our discussion. No one said permission created a prohibition. But, the statement concerning implication is always false, especially when we are dealing with an area of sovereignty or ownership. Any granting of permission denotes the presence of a prohibition. If I own fifty acres and I give you permission to cut "the oak trees" the prior prohibition against cutting any trees is evidenced. And the *strong* implication from the permission is that there is a prohibition against cutting any trees other than oak. If I add the word "only" the prohibition against cutting other trees is made explicit by the permission. The actual prohibition is "created" by my rights as owner. Similar is God's sovereignty over creation. When God said humans could eat the vegetation it is obvious that they understood there was a prohibition on eating the animals (including their blood). The prohibition was proven when God gave permission to eat animals (except their blood). In legal thought "permission" actually does evidence the presence of a prohibition.

>[MS]: 3. Prohibition of one thing does not create permission for other things.

Irrelevant to our discussion. No one said it did.

>[MS]: 2. The absence of permission does not create a prohibition. The absence of permission means no more than an individual must decide for themselves what to do, if anything.<

While your replacing "prove" with "create" makes this statement true, your conclusion is still false. Again, an absence of permission may or may not indicate a prohibition. But, this is still an irrelevant straw-man since I never claimed that absence of permission *created* the prohibition. However, we are not dealing with just an absence of permission here. What we have is a withholding of dominion over or permission to use something that belongs to God. We also have an explicit command not to eat blood which has a direct application to blood transfusions. More important, this prohibition is based on a clear principle which creates a prohibition on mundane uses for all blood.

>[MS]: 4. The absence of prohibition does not create or imply permission. The absence of prohibition means no more than an individual must decide for themselves what to do, if anything.<

Again, irrelevant. As above, this is an inductive fallacy since it is not universally true. As a matter of fact, the maxim "whatever is not forbidden, is permitted" is a standard legal concept in certain circumstances. Nevertheless, this doesn't apply to our subject because we do not have an absence of prohibition. Controlled by

your presupposition, you see no prohibition for transfusions because you ignore the Scriptural principles as well as the complete testimony of Scripture. An ignoring of principles results in an unscriptural and illogical demand for an explicit "thou shall not" covering every possible use of blood.

As with number 2 above, your conclusion would only apply if we had total silence on the matter in Scripture. In the case at hand, scriptural principles and statements revealing God's disapproval are enough to create a prohibition without it being spelled out in written detail. Humans were not left to decide for themselves what is right and wrong regarding the use of blood. God expects humans to use their God given intelligence to perceive what God approves of.

>[MS]: 5. A prohibition of one thing does not imply permission is needed regarding unprohibited items or acts.<

Lack of specification makes this statement useless. It can be true or false depending on the relationship of the "prohibited thing" to the "unprohibited items." However, in the only application I can see to our subject, the lesser would include the greater. An explicit prohibition against the eating of animal blood would incontestably prohibit the eating of the more sacred human blood without express permission. A prohibition against hatred would prohibit murder, against lust would prohibit fornication, and etc.

>[MS]: Then you write: "every use of blood by humans had to be expressly approved by God. [All of these are clearly shown in every Scripture dealing with the use of blood.]" This statement really is confusing to me. First, since our teachings and practices assert a prohibition, your statement defies a fundamental truism that the absence of permission does not create a prohibition. How do you support your assertion that "every use of blood by humans had to be expressly approved by God"? Remember that we are dealing with pre-Mosaic Law here. Once we have established God's requirements within that frame then we will consider what came afterward, including whether anything changed.<

A continuation of your straw man argument. My argument is not that "absence of permission *creates* a prohibition."

This fourth point of mine was truncated for brevity's sake. However, there should be nothing confusing about it when read with the sentence following it (added in brackets above) or when the complete argument is referred to. I simply offered as evidence the undeniable fact that in Scripture, every mention of blood use by humans was only that which was expressly approved by God (eg. sacrifice and selling un-bled meat). There is no scriptural record that any faithful human ever took it upon himself to use blood for any other purpose.

So, what "supports my assertion" is the testimony of Scripture. Do you have any testimony from Scripture which supports your position that humans could/did determine for themselves how to use blood? Can you show me any use of blood by faithful individuals which was not somehow approved by God? This testimony of Scripture is strong evidence of how God viewed blood and that humans knew decisions regarding blood use were outside their prerogative, it belonged to God. This also provides evidence that faithful humans did not need a specific prohibition against mundane uses of blood beyond the principles and laws stated to Noah.

I have already shown that your "fundamental truism" is completely misapplied in this case since we do have a direct prohibition applying to transfusions and also a clear denial of permission--not just an "absence of permission." And no, I was not dealing solely with pre-Mosaic Law here. I have no fear of letting the whole of Scripture explain and verify the correct understanding of God's laws. Dividing Scripture as you do can only lead to error (2Cor.13:1).

>[MS]: Second, when blood banks and hematologists use blood for purposes of extracting portions to transfuse as "major" or "minor" parts this is in fact humans using blood in a way that God did not EXPRESSLY approve. So how this helps support what we teach escapes me. I would appreciate your clarification here.<

How quickly you forget. "We can legitimately use the testimony of creation as an extension of His word on the matter." The fact is that from his use of fractions individuals can properly conclude that God has given his express approval. We *must* consider this when determining doctrine and cannot prohibit what God has indicated is a proper use of blood fractions. Therefore, when there is some valid reason for doubt our teachings

judge no right or wrong, but properly leave it up to personal conscience. Our teaching on this cannot be criticized.

As I said before: "The evidence that God did not include fractions in the prohibition on use of blood stands while there is absolutely no support for any use of major blood components." Therefore, our teaching stands as completely scriptural as well as in harmony with the facts revealed in God's creation. On the other hand, blood transfusions are contrary to every explicit and implicit scriptural statement concerning the use of blood.

>[MS]: To avoid any confusion about what I expect to have evidenced from the Bible on this subject, I am not looking for texts explicit to modern medical blood transfusions any more than I would expect to see reference to murder by gunshot. We know murder by gunshot is wrong because the Bible condemns murder. Therefore HOW murder is accomplished is beside the point of determining whether murder was committed. Regarding modern medical use of blood, biblical texts need only prove that using donor blood is prohibited. Then HOW donor blood is used would be beside the point of knowing whether a prohibited act had occurred.<

We know eating blood by transfusions is wrong because the Bible condemns eating blood. Therefore HOW eating of blood is accomplished is beside the point of determining whether eating of blood was committed.

Biblical texts provide adequate evidence showing that eating *any* blood is prohibited because they teach: 1.) That blood is equated with life and thus sacred. Life is in the blood *while in living animals.* It doesn't become sacred due to the animal being killed. 2.) The very same texts show that human blood was viewed by God as even more sacred. 3.) Scripture explicitly prohibits eating blood and contains no limitation to only blood from killed animals. 4.) The law against eating animals which had died on their own demonstrates that it wasn't the killing which caused the prohibition. 5.) Scripture shows that due to life being in the blood it could only be poured out. 6.) The Apostolic decree continued the prohibition as stated in Moses' writings with the all-encompassing command to "abstain from blood" again with no limitation to only blood from dead animals. Additional evidence lies in the fact that 7.) God retained blood of living creatures as His alone. And, 8.) because the testimony of Scripture shows that humans understood that blood was sacred since they never used blood in any way which was not expressly approved by God.

It takes quite a stretch of the imagination to think that eating donor blood is not really eating blood or that it doesn't violate the command to "abstain from blood." In order to limit the application to only blood from animals which had been killed for food you must ignore the consistent teaching in Scripture revealing God's view of blood.

>[MS]: Regarding pre-Mosaic Law elements to our discussion, you wrote:

>[Ron]⁷: "blood sacrifices and covenants denoting life were offered from the time of Able."

>[MS]: My question here is where does the Bible speak of blood sacrifices from the time of Abel so that you can assert as you have?...But what scriptural proof is there that blood played any significant role in sacrifices from the time of Abel, if any role at all, so you can assert as you have? If you have in mind Abel's sacrifice, I read that he made fatty pieces a part to his sacrifice, which also undoubtedly means an animal died for him to make this offering, but I see no mention of blood being party to his offering...Do you have some other example in mind?<

You have a way of admitting the obvious and then denying it if it doesn't support your presuppositions. As you observed, Abel's sacrifice meant an animal's blood was obviously shed. This was also true of Noah's, Abraham's and Job's sacrifices (Gen.8:20; 22:13; Job.1:5; 42:8). These were sacrifices which obviously included blood and gained explicit approval from God. This being the case they are valid evidences revealing the view of blood throughout the Bible. This view contradicts your assumption that it could be used in a mundane way. Admittedly, until Noah was given the freedom to eat animals there was no need for humans to be given the understanding that blood alone represents life as opposed to the whole animal. Until Noah's time the whole animal, blood included, was recognized as belonging to God and was used only with his express approval.

⁷ In Rhoades reply to he mistakenly wrote the initials MS in this bracket. I inserted Ron to correctly identify the writer.

>[MS]: 1. The Mosaic Law set Israel apart from its neighbor nations, but this was not God setting Israel apart as the only worshippers He recognized as worshipping him throughout the globe we call earth. God setting Israel apart with provisions of the Mosaic Law was but one provision leading to the ultimate unification of persons wanting to worship Him from all nations of the earth. This is evidenced in the fact that the Mosaic Law had no requirements for proselytizing but Christianity does. (Matt. 24:14, 28:19, 20) In the time of Moses had living according to the Mosaic Law been the only worship God recognized from those wanting to worship Him their faithful forefathers had done then Jehovah would have made provision to proselytize them, but He did not.<

Your conclusion is simply your unsupported opinion. It does not follow from any argument you present here. Do you have any Scriptural evidence whatsoever to support your view that God accepted as worshipers any outside of his approved provision? For someone who demands explicit Scripture statements from others you adopt an awful lot of personal beliefs that go contrary to Scriptural teaching. You simply give me speculations of misguided BibleStudents and other universal salvationists.

I have already presented scriptural proof which refuted your claim that those outside the Mosaic arrangement could be called "believers." These scriptures equally refute any idea that God accepted as "worshippers" those who were outside the Mosaic arrangement. You have avoided responding to those scriptures and you have given me absolutely no scripture evidence to support your opinion. I wrote:

>>[Ron]: To the contrary, it is a gross mistake to believe that anyone outside of God's arrangement for salvation can be termed "believers" (Ac.15:6-7). Because of ignorance or rebellion the "nations" could not believe and were alienated from God unless they joined God's people by obeying the Law (Eph.4:17-18; 2:11-12,17). While in the past God "overlooked" the ignorance of those outside his arrangement and promises to "resurrect these unrighteous," they still cannot be termed "believers" (Ac.17:30; 24:15; Rom.9:22).<<

Notice these scriptures show that those outside the Mosaic covenant were alienated from God, without God, without hope and far off from God. There is absolutely no Scriptural concept of acceptable worshipers outside of the Mosaic arrangement (Deut.4:6-8; 12:11; 16:6; Ps.147:19,20; Am.3:1-2; Rom.10:2-3). Those who wanted to worship Jehovah could only do so through the temple at Jerusalem (2King.17:29-33/Jn.4:19-22). This was the only provision made for proselytes to approach Jehovah (2Chron.6:19-42; Jn.4:22; Acts 8:27; Rom.3:1-2). Every pertinent Scriptural statement shows that, outside the Mosaic arrangement, non-Israelites could approach God for the first time only through the Christian arrangement (Col.1:21-2; 22:13-14).

While God did make an arrangement for any outsiders to become true worshipers, there was no need for a worldwide proselytism. It cannot be concluded from this that God accepted the worship of those outside his approved arrangement. Any such conclusion would contradict Scripture which specifically states otherwise. God simply allowed nations to go their own way without interference while provision was made for all these "ignorant" ones to become true worshipers in the future resurrection.

>[MS]: 2. Regarding blood, the text of Leviticus 17:11, 12 EXPRESSLY states TWO elements joined together as THE reason for WHY Jehovah stated higher requirements to Israel than He did to Noah. The two elements being 1) because of the already established metaphorical usage of blood for life and 2) because with the Mosaic Law God for the first time required blood to be used for sacred atonement sacrifices.<

You are still ASSUMING the Mosaic Law contained "higher requirements" regarding blood. This is because you ignore the Scriptural fact that requirements were perceived from principles. While detailed requirements were now explicitly spelled out by Law, there were no "higher" requirements regarding blood which were not already inherent in the Noachian mandate and it's foundation principles. Humans already knew that since blood was sacred it could not be used without God's express permission. Again, "blood" is not used here as a metaphor. It denotes the substance blood while "soul" denotes life.

However, I will admit that I have to correct my terminology here concerning my use of the words "reason" and "basis" as synonyms. After re-examining the text and referring to about a dozen commentaries I will also modify my comments and concede that, although debatable, it is possible to grammatically understand two *reasons*

here for the Mosaic Laws on blood. The conjunction "and" (W) in verse 11 can either serve to join two coordinate clauses indicating two reasons, or it can be used to introduce blood's use on the altar as a separate thought and a result--not a reason.

While the grammar can allow either view, arguing for the later view is: 1.) the fact that in the third clause "life being in the blood" is explicitly stated to be the reason (KiY) for blood's use on the altar. 2.) While they could not eat or use any blood, not all animal blood had to be used on the altar but only the blood of sacrificial animals. 3.) When the law is repeated in verses 13,14 concerning blood of game animals the only reason given for pouring blood on the ground is due to the life being in the blood. And, 4.) in the parallel Scripture the life being in the blood is the only reason given and its use in sacrifice is simply a separate thought resulting from blood's sanctity (De.12:23ff).

However, many commentators have recognized either two reasons, one reason and a basis for that reason, or as you do, one reason with two elements. These are: 1.) The sanctity of blood as life repeated from Gen.9:4, and 2.) the use of blood for atonement sacrifices. But, as noted by several Hebrew scholars, one thing explicit is that the two "elements" are not equal since the text clearly states that blood's sanctity was the *principle reason* as well as the *basis* for blood's use on the altar. The *basis* was exactly the same principle made clear in Genesis: "because the life is in the blood."

The Hebrew scholars Keil and Delitzsch comment:

"In vers. 1-14 the prohibition of the eating of blood is repeated...and after a more precise explanation of the reason for the law, is supplemented by instructions for the disposal of the blood of edible game...The reason for the command in ver. 11, "For the soul of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls," is not a double one, viz. (1.) because the blood contained the soul of the animal, and (2) because God had set apart the blood, as the medium of expiation for the human soul, for the altar. The first reason simply forms the foundation for the second: God appointed the blood for the altar, as containing the soul of the animal, to be the medium of expiation for the souls of men, and therefore prohibited its being used as food....The purpose of the command was to prevent the desecration of the vehicle of the soulful life...Because the distinguishing characteristic of the blood was, that it was the soul of the being when living in the flesh."

As I pointed out in my previous post, the explicit *basis* for the laws prohibiting the use of blood is exactly the same as given Noah, i.e., blood's sanctity as life. Since animal sacrifices are now made mandatory, blood's use on the altar can possibly be understood as a reason though only a *secondary* one.

There is absolutely no cause to believe that we have two equal reasons or a new basis for the Mosaic Law on blood. We have ONE basis which is explicitly cited as the reason blood was used in sacrifices. Notice the particle KIY again (17:11, 14). These verses four times state that they are not to eat or use blood BECAUSE life is in the blood--and God has placed blood on the altar to atone for their souls BECAUSE life is in the blood (Cf. De.12:23). We have one and only one basis for not using blood *and* for blood's use on the altar. It is exactly the same basis given to Noah for the prohibition against eating blood!!

A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, based on the Lexicon of William Gesenius and edited by three clergymen, Drs. Brown, Driver and Briggs, in its corrected edition of 1952. On page 659, "3. The nefesh...whose life resides in the blood...(*HENCE* sacrificial use of blood, and its prohibition in other uses)." [my emphasis].

"To blood is ascribed in Scripture the mysterious sacredness which belongs to life, and God reserved it to himself when allowing man the dominion over and the use of the lower animals for food. Thus reserved, it acquires a double power: (1) that of sacrificial atonement; and (2)..."-Smith's Bible Dictionary

Therefore, arguing for two elements to the reason does not support your position. Blood being placed on the altar would not be a reason for, or cause, "higher requirements" than those already inherent in the controlling principle enunciated to Noah. This is because blood being placed on the altar did not make it sacred but was only the *result* of its being sacred as life. Blood's use on the altar would not, in itself, prevent people from eating it or using it (cf. grains, animal flesh, wine, water, etc.). The *only* basis for the Law preventing people from using blood at all was due to it's being life and only God's, i.e., sacred. And these reasons for blood's sanctity were already stated and present from Noah's time.

>>[RR]: So, scripturally, there is no way to separate the Noachian and Mosaic mandates, or to see a change in the sacredness or use of blood. From Abel's sacrifice to the Apostolic Decree, every Scriptural mention of blood use places it in exactly the same sacred position. Added features of the Law code changed nothing in regard to sacredness or how blood was disposed of or used.<<

Yours,

Ron Rhoades

From: Ron Rhoades to Marvin Shilmer

Date: Wed, 14 Aug 2002 16:39 EST

Marvin,

As a review of the primary arguments you have presented I have compiled this summation of our conversation. These are the pertinent points from my perspective, so if you feel that I have missed some primary argument feel free to let me know.

Your arguments have failed to counter the following Scriptural evidence proving that the use of blood in transfusions is prohibited:

Biblical texts provide adequate evidence showing that making use of **any** blood is prohibited because they teach: 1.) That blood is equated with life and thus incontestably sacred. Life is in the blood **while in living animals.** It doesn't become sacred due to the animal being killed. 2.) While God gave animals into man's hand as food, He retained blood of living creatures as His alone. Again, indisputably sacred. 3.) The very same texts show that human blood was viewed by God as even more sacred. 4.) Scripture explicitly prohibits eating blood and contains no limitation to only blood from killed animals. 5.) The law against eating animals which had died on their own demonstrates that it wasn't the killing which caused the prohibition. 6.) Scripture shows that due to life being in the blood it could only be poured out. 7.) The Apostolic decree continued the prohibition as stated in Moses' writings with the all-encompassing command to "abstain from blood" again with no limitation to only blood from dead animals. And, 8.) because the testimony of Scripture shows that humans understood that blood was sacred since they never used blood in any way which was not expressly approved by God.

>You argue against the Society's stand on fractions.<

In doing this you first ignore the fact that JW's do not take a **doctrinal stand** concerning use of fractions, but leave it to personal choice. Secondly, you ignore the fact that in criticizing the use of fractions you destroy your own argument for allowing the use of primary blood components in transfusions. Last, but not least, you offer absolutely no valid argument against the scriptural and logical evidence in creation which requires us to exclude fractions from our doctrinal prohibition.

>You claim that, like whole blood components, fractions equally serve as "food."<

This argument distracts from the fact that primary components are clearly "food" and thus transfusions are obviously contrary to the specific command not to "eat" blood. This argument ignores the fact that if fractions are food it would destroy any argument for transfusing blood and thus would only strengthen the doctrine against blood transfusions.

You give us a self-serving and inaccurate definition of "food" and then fail to respond to the scientific definitions of "food" which seem to exclude fractions from being classified as food.

>In an attempt to show the same use by Jehovah of whole blood you offer as evidence the occurrence of DMT.<

When it is shown that DMT is not parallel to the normal exchange of fractions between two separate circulatory systems, you offer no response outside of personal opinion.

>You claim that there is no "principle" presenting blood as sacred in the Noachian mandate but that "blood" is only used "illustratively," as a metaphor, for "life."<

This argument does not support your position since "blood" being used elsewhere as a metaphor for "life" in no way denies its sanctity, but only confirms it. Contrary to your assertion, "blood" is not used here as a metaphor for "life" here in Genesis 9:4,5. "Blood" denotes the literal substance, while the word "soul" denotes "life." Since blood itself is equated with life and is withheld, "set apart" as God's, it is clearly sacred.

>You claim that the prohibition against blood does not apply to donor blood but only to animals which had been killed.<

This argument first misses, or distracts from, the basic principles governing **why** the ban on eating blood was given. That is, since blood in **living creatures** was equated with life and retained as God's alone it was sacred. Scripture contains no limitation to only blood from killed animals but specifically shows by its laws against eating already dead carcasses that it wasn't the killing which causes the prohibition. Then the Apostolic decree conclusively defined the prohibition from Moses' writings with the all-encompassing command to "abstain from blood," again with no limitation to only blood from dead animals. Thus sustaining life by eating blood from either living or dead animals is contrary to God's explicit statements concerning the sanctity of blood.

>You offer as evidence your opinion that Noah **could have** used blood for other purposes.<

This contradicts the plain Scriptural fact that blood was sacred and thus humans were not given the authority to use blood as they wished. Every Scriptural statement concerning blood presents it as something which humans have no right to put to personal use except with God's express approval. Since, there is absolutely no record that faithful descendants of Noah ever felt they could use blood in other ways your conclusion is unscriptural, based only on **your** speculation.

>You claim that the Mosaic Law demanded "higher" requirements for only the Israelites due to blood now being made sacred by its use in sacrifice.<

This argument ignores the scriptural fact that the Mosaic Law only perpetuated the previous ban based on the same sacred principle: "life is in the blood." It ignores that fact that blood was not made sacred by the command to use it in sacrifice, but rather, was used on the altar **because** of its sacred position representing "life" in God's eyes. It ignores the scriptural fact that the all inclusive prohibition against blood in the Apostolic Decree was specifically based on what was written in the Book of Moses concerning blood. Therefore, both the Mosaic and the Apostolic decrees unambiguously confirm the total prohibition inherent in the Noachian mandate and applies it to Christians.

Added requirements of the Law code changed nothing in regard to blood's sacredness, how it was disposed of or how it could be used. Blood being placed on the altar would not cause "higher requirements" than those already apparent in the controlling principles already enunciated to Noah. The **only** basis for the Law preventing people from using blood at all was due to it's being life and only God's, i.e., sacred.

>You insist on an explicit command prohibiting any other uses of blood, including transfusions.<

The result of ignoring Scriptural principles is an unscriptural and illogical demand for an explicit "thou shall not" before admitting any prohibition. Demanding an explicit "thou shalt not" for every possible use of blood is ridiculous, infantile and manifests a spiritual blindness (1Cor.2:14-16). This idea is soundly refuted by the nature of principles and Scripture examples. It does not require a law specifying every possible infraction before one can be disobedient to God. Scriptural principles and statements revealing God's views are enough to create a prohibition without it being spelled out in written detail. God expects humans to use their God given intelligence to perceive what God approves of.

God did not keep from punishing those who should have ascertained laws from principles (Rom.1:20). Did Christ and the apostles feel there had to be a specifically stated code and consequences before there was a law binding upon God's people? (Mt.19:3-9; 1Tim.2:11-14; 1Jn.3:11, 12; 1Cor.2:14-16). What was the specific commands and stated consequences broken by the people destroyed at the flood? What was the specific law and it's detailed consequences that Joseph was obeying so as not to "sin against God?" (Gen.2:24; 39:9).

When a person keeps in mind the basic God given principle that blood is sacred there is no need for explicit statements banning each and every other use of blood. Recognition of the sacredness of blood would deter any non-sacred use.

Ron

From: Marvin Shilmer to Ron Rhoades

Date: Fri, 16 Aug 2002 21:57 EST

Dear Brother Rhoades,

There are several misunderstandings in your replies of my views. Because I do not have the time or the inclination at this point to detail each one instead I will make a few concise statements at the beginning of this reply that should be kept in mind throughout our discussion. In no particular order, here they are:

1. I do not assert that Jehovah gave Noah permission to use blood in any way. I only assert what I said before, that had Noah used blood for mundane uses he would not have been in violation of any STATED prohibition since the only STATED prohibition had to do with eating blood. Also, whether you like this or not, logic dictates that I maintain this view until the question is settled of whether the stated prohibition on eating blood was de facto prohibition on using blood in other ways. Me asserting as I have regarding Noah is for purposes of fully investigating the issue. My only loyalty is to what can be proven logically from God's word the Bible. I have no pet ideas or convictions for purposes of our discussion. I am not trying to convince you of anything, or to change your mind. Indeed, preparing our heart for meditating on God's word requires that we refrain from holding so tightly to a cherished view that we forget to give a subject the objectivity it deserves. Regardless of our personal views, we should let God's word be found true though every man a liar.

2. I do not presume that Noah used blood for anything prior to the Noachian Law of Genesis 9. I have only asserted that God's STATED requirements in the Noachian Law do not make uses other than eating blood an act of disobedience. Again, I know you dispute this latter statement so I will address it later in my reply.

3. I am not parsing Scriptures to serve preferences. My suggestion to analyze the Noachian Law was only to serve as a building block for analyzing the entire body of Biblical discussion on the subject of blood. Frankly, I find it offensive that you apparently have a prejudice against me that makes you feel that my intentions are less than honest and sincere toward making sure of what God's will is on our subject regardless of interim personal or organizational views of mine or anyone else's. To me our discussion was convoluted to a point where I was not sure my understanding of your views or your arguments was clear. The suggestion to look first at the Noachian Law was to improve this, at least for my ability to follow your replies. Since my desire for understanding overcomes any personal offense I may sense then I simply ignore my initial umbrage at what appears as bias on your part toward me. In other words, regardless of how I feel you've treated me until now, I still want to completely hear your reasoning on our subject because my own may be faulty. Humility requires this disposition of everyone.

4. Aspects of our discussion that seemed to me as irrelevant or that could be subjective and likely to add confusion I have not replied to details you offered precisely for that reason. An example has to do with blood transfusions between some unborn twins. I explained why I was leaving off an examination of such a perspective for the time being, but you seem to make an issue of this as though I am behaving illogically or dishonestly, or avoiding your views altogether. I do not understand this on your part. I know what your views are on this because I have them in writing! I simply feel it is best to come to a clearer picture of the Biblical view first, and thereafter look to creation for what we can learn on the subject, if anything. There is also the very subjective question of what is natural and therefore of God versus what is unnatural and therefore not of God (or MAYBE not of God). Such subjectivity makes me want to first build an examination of Scripture because, as I said before, this is where we find our Creator's WORDS and therefore His requirements. Afterward learning from creation is certainly appropriate. To me it is unsound to use the subjective to determine the objective. We should determine the objective and then look at the subjective to see what that teaches us about the objective. That is, the subjective might help us to extend our understanding of the objective, but the subjective cannot establish the objective.

Now I will get to our topic and, if you don't mind, I will do it in such a way that hopefully I can learn something of your reasoning toward helping my understanding of your conclusions. My intent is not to challenge your beliefs. I want to understand your arguments and reasons for believe as you do so that I can use this in re-examining my own thinking and convictions. My focus will be on parts of your reply I feel are most critical, not

that other aspects of your reply do not deserve consideration as the discussion should ultimately include the entire body of Scriptural testimony on our subject.

Now, on to our discussion.

First I am trying to epitomize and structure your arguments for sake of me understanding your replies in our discussion. Thereafter I will comment. If you feel my attempts to put your argument into some semblance of a structure errs then please correct the structure accordingly.

Your belief that medical transfusion of blood is ungodly is that you feel this is using blood in a way God did not give express permission for and we need express permission for specific uses of blood. Furthermore you contend an explicit prohibition on eating ANY blood and that medical transfusion is eating blood and therefore in direct contradiction of God's specific prohibition against eating blood. This means that for two reasons you feel blood transfusions are ungodly: 1) we do not have express permission to do it and 2) it falls under an express prohibition not to eat blood.

As for why we need God's express approval for using blood in any specific way you contend this results from blood being sacred. You contend that sanctity requires permission for uses beyond specifically stated prohibitions. As you say it,

[RR] "When a person keeps in mind the basic God given principle that blood is sacred there is no need for explicit statements banning each and every other use of blood. Recognition of the sacredness of blood would deter any non-sacred use."

And,

[RR] "Humans already knew that since blood was sacred it could not be used without God's express permission."

And,

[RR] "Every Scriptural law and statement concerning the substance of blood confirms this understanding that blood itself was sacred, belonging only to God and this could be used only with his express approval."

And,

[RR] "It's impossible to avoid the conclusion that this meant blood was not to be used for any purpose by humans without God's express approval."

Your conclusion that blood is sacred is built on the following premises:

1. Blood belongs to God.
2. Blood is life
3. The right to use blood is withheld from man.

Blood belongs to God:

The first premise (blood belongs to God) is irrelevant to our discussion because everything belongs to God yet He does not require that we have His express approval for specific uses of each of His specific creations. "To Jehovah belong the earth and that which fills it, The productive land and those dwelling in it."-- Psalm 24:1

Blood is life

The second premise (blood is life) would support a conclusion that blood is sacred insofar as it is representative of life. But this sanctity does not Scripturally establish that we need God express permission for uses beyond

specifically stated prohibitions. On the question of whether one stated prohibition is de facto prohibition of other uses not specified, it is best to see if this agrees with other Biblical models. Two that come to mind are life and the Tree of Knowledge. Both are/were sacred and both have/had prohibitions on their use.

Life

Life is sacred, and each of us has life. "All the souls—to me they belong. As the soul of the father so likewise the soul of the son—to me they belong." (Ezekiel 18:4) Regardless of the sanctity of life, beyond specific prohibitions both of us are free to do things with life that we do not have God's express permission for. For example, neither of us can fornicate without breaking God's will because fornication is specifically prohibited. On the other hand, either of us could become an astronaut and travel into outerspace and the other would be hard pressed to prove God's will had been infringed. We could also take along our children and pets into space, which also have life, and yet proving that we had somehow committed a sacrilegious act would be impossible. This would be true even though we do not have God's express permission for traveling into outerspace as astronauts. This does not mean that becoming an astronaut has God's approval. Rather it means only that neither of us could prove it has God's disapproval. In the case of blood transfusion I do not contend we have God's approval for it but simply question whether we can prove it has God's disapproval, which means we could Scripturally shun Christians for accepting such.

Furthermore, even though life is sacred and has always depicted Biblically in a sacred light, and even though no express approval had been given for killing animals, we know that the first faithful God-fearing man, Abel, killed animals. That is, Abel took life that belonged to God. Yet there is nothing to suggest that this was an ungodly act as though killing animals needed God's express approval. We also know that God himself taught His human creation to make use of animal parts when he constructed clothing out of animal skins for Adam and Eve. This was de facto permission to use animal parts and blood is an animal part. Therefore permission existed for using blood as an animal part. There is no specific reference to humans using animal blood to satisfy a material need aside from food, but the Biblical account of Abel killing and sacrificing an animal does mean that something happened to the blood in that instance, we just do not know what specifically happened to it (i.e., was it part of Abel's sacrifice or did he use that part of the animal for something else or use it at all). Nevertheless, without stipulations, God's act of providing Adam and Eve with animal skin garments was an object lesson that using animal parts for material needs had God's approval.

Tree of Knowledge

The Tree of Knowledge was sacred in that Jehovah restricted Adam from eating (or touching) its fruit. Did that mean Adam needed God's express permission to sit under this tree and enjoy its shade? Could Adam have enjoyed this tree's fall color by looking upon it without God's express approval? Could Adam enjoy this tree's aroma without God's express approval? Had Adam done any of these would he have committed some sacrilegious act? The answer is, maybe yes and maybe no. Since none of us can read God's mind then insisting that any of these is sacrilegious would be judging a matter that rightfully belongs to God. These matters would be for each individual to decide and reap consequences at God's hands rather than any man's.

So, assuming blood is sacred in that it "is life," this does not mean God expects us to understand prohibitions on its use beyond what He has specified Himself. That is, as long as our use of blood is not in violation of his requirements then we have not treated blood or, more importantly, God's will with impunity or sacrilegiously.

The right to use blood is withheld from man

Your third premise (The right to use blood is withheld from man) would prove your conclusion that medical transfusion is ungodly, if it is true. As far as the Noachian Law is concerned, a person might feel your premise is intimated there yet they could conclude otherwise too. Why? The context of the Noachian prohibition on eating blood does not support your blanket assertion here because the prohibition was on eating and the only eating offered to Noah in the context of the Noachian Law was that of living animals he could kill for food. That is, the context does not discuss eating of animals that had died of themselves and therefore would not require slaughtering. This leaves open the possibility that the Noachian prohibition against eating blood was only applicable to animals killed for food. If we concluded this based on solely on the Noachian Law then we would be reading a conclusion into the text. It can only be concluded from independent confirmation (i.e., another text that addresses it). Whether the possibility can be established is another question and one I will address further

on. Also, the only “withholding” spoken of has to do with eating. Therefore, even if we rip the text of Genesis 9:4 out of the context of killing living animals for food, the only prohibition uttered has to do with eating, which is still less than a blanket withholding of use of blood. So at best we could say the Noachian Law would prohibit eating any sort of blood, which is what the later Mosaic Law actually stipulated for those obligated to its standards. But a prohibition on EATING is not a blanket prohibition on USING. The only explicit withholding had to do with eating. It is an assumption to read more into the Noachian Law.

For the preceding reasons your argument is inconclusive that medical transfusions of blood is an ungodly act.

This raises the question of whether anything else in the Bible indicates God's prohibition to Noah was limited to eating blood taken from killing animals for food. Several times you too request for Biblical evidence that God anywhere approved of using blood for non-sacrificial purposes. The text is Deuteronomy 14:21 where God states,

“YOU must not eat any body [already] dead. To the alien resident who is inside your gates you may give it, and he must eat it; or there may be a selling of it to a foreigner, because you are a holy people to Jehovah your God.”

Since our discussion is about God's will and WHAT HE holds as sacred versus sacrilegious regarding blood, the text of Deuteronomy 14:21 is significant because it prohibits Israelites and proselytes from eating unbled flesh of animals that died of themselves yet it provides this same unbled flesh EXPRESSLY for food to those outside requirements of the Mosaic Law. These animals had not been killed and they held their full measure of blood. Since 1) God has never ended the Noachian Law and 2) since the Noachian Law is God's standard and 3) since that law is applicable to all mankind then these whom God provided unbled animal carcasses to were those who were, in His eyes, still under the Noachian Law though they were not under the Mosaic Law. Unless we can successfully argue that God was intentionally aiding and abetting WHAT HE considered a sacrilegious act (eating an unbled animal carcass that died of itself) then we must accept that, in God's eyes, eating this flesh was 1) not a sacrilegious act TO HIM nor 2) was it a sacrilegious act for those He only held accountable to the Noachian Law.

Your previous comments on the relevance of Deuteronomy 14:21 do not address the fact that this is an unsolicited act on God's part and that He is the one providing expressly for SOMEONE (people) to eat unbled flesh. You simply dismissed the text as something God allowed to unbelievers but you ignore the fact that the text does not present things as an allowance but rather as a unilateral and intentional provision from Jehovah to persons outside what he required under the Mosaic Law. You also ignore the fact that this is an act of GOD giving unbled carcasses as food. Frankly, regardless of who He gave these unbled carcasses to, this ACT OF GOD refutes the idea that GOD prohibited the use (or EATING!) of blood when it came from an animal that had not been slaughtered. Again, until you can prove and explain why God would aid and abet an act that you feel is sacrilegious based on the Noachian Law then you have not proved your claims of the Noachian Law.

I would assert that outside explicit and very clear evidence to the contrary we should always assume that God ALWAYS treats sacred things as he would have us treat them. That is, regardless of how other people may act or what they may believe, we should always assume God has acted as he would have us act. This is what makes the text of Deuteronomy 14:21 important. It does not portray an act of ungodly men. It portrays an act of God, and an unsolicited and unilateral one at that. Whether these non-Israelite/proselyte persons were willing to receive or buy and eat these unbled carcasses God left to each one to decide. But REGARDLESS of their choice, God provided that they could obtain and EAT this unbled flesh.

Therefore, I assert that unless a person can successfully argue that Deuteronomy 14:21 has God aiding and abetting a sacrilegious act that it stands as confirmation that the Noachian Law was not intended to prohibit the use (or eating) of blood aside from eating the blood of animals killed for food.

Finally, in your answers to me you have not defended what we teach on the subject of blood; you have defended your personal views, which I am not too concerned about. For example,

1. Your assertion that we must have God's express permission for uses of blood aside from sacrificial condemns what we teach as false because our policy on blood allows us to accept certain uses of blood without God's express approval. When our blood is removed for medical testing this is a use of blood that God has not given express promotion for. The act of taking blood, fractionating it into red cells, plasma, etc and then fractionating it

again into lesser components like hemoglobin is all using blood. Our use of byproducts of all this manipulation of blood is supporting a use of blood that does not have God's express approval.

2. When you object that I am "assuming the Mosaic Law contained "higher requirements" regarding blood" you are not objecting to me; you are objecting to our publication that says, " People of all nations were bound by the requirement at Genesis 9:3, 4, but those under the [Mosaic] Law were held by God to a higher standard in adhering to that requirement than were foreigners and alien residents who had not become worshipers of Jehovah." (it-1 345 Blood; bracketed word added for clarification)

This sentence makes it a legitimate question to ask: Does God require Christians to abstain from blood to the extent he expected of Noah and the nations of people that descended from him or does He require Christians to abstain from blood to the EXTENT that He required under a Law that His son's death abolished?

The absurdity of your claims about whether, for instance, hemoglobin is food versus a red cell was to the extent that I did not and do not see an need to address it with any detail. The fact of the matter is that our digestive tract does not see hemoglobin or red cells; it sees protein, which is made up primarily of amino acids. The digestive system breaks proteins down into their individual amino acids. These are absorbed into the blood and carried to the cells of your body where they are reassembled into whatever protein is needed. Since the digestive tract does not discriminate between red cells and hemoglobin. Both are dealt with as protein, which means both are digested as protein. Rather than depend on all your or my reading of science books regarding what constitutes food I suggest you go talk to an educated nutritionist at your local hospital. They will be happy to tell you the same thing. Frankly, this entire aspect of our discussion is absurd for the reason that your logic, for example, that red cells is food but hemoglobin is not would mean that it is okay for us to buy and eat pudding made from blood that had first been fractionated into parts other than red cells, white cells, plasma and platelets but then stirred back together as a goulash of hemoglobin, protein membranes etc! The idea is too absurd on the face to merit serious discussion. Had Eve remained obedient to God and later one of her offspring had rebelled by cutting a limb off the Tree of Knowledge and took to separating it into minute fractions, had he offered these fractionated forms to Eve and she ate them in their fractionated state, would she have been faithful to God? Would she have been eating something FROM the Tree of Knowledge?

As for who God accepts, I know God accepted the worship Noah offered. Noah offered to God what is described at Acts 10:34 and 35 where Peter is recorded saying, "For a certainty I perceive that God is not partial, but in every nation the man that fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him." Noah feared God and acted in accordance to what God required of him. He was righteous, which means he was acceptable to God. God has not changed. For this reason persons whom God held to the same standards He required of Noah were likewise acceptable as long as they acted as Noah did. Some of these descendants of Noah may never have had any knowledge of Moses or Israel so they never had an opportunity to choose to put themselves under its higher requirements, the ones Jesus' death later abolished. They could have been living in what we call today North America. I have no reason to believe that these descendants of Noah we unacceptable to God if they acted as Noah did. Do you?

My consideration of our subject of blood and what God requires centers on whether there is sound Scriptural evidence to impose our view on pain of shunning. Since we teach a prohibition then I am looking for proof of a prohibition such as the one we teach. I do not need to prove that a prohibition does not exist though doing so would certainly refute what we teach, should that be necessary. My only concern is finding sound Scriptural evidence that the prohibition we teach does indeed exist and that it is God's and not our own. So, please do not understand that I am trying to prove that there is NO PROHIBITION, for that is not the case. I am only looking to see if a prohibition such as we teach in our publications exists in the Bible as we say it does. If the conclusion is that we cannot prove a prohibition SUCH AS WE TEACH then changes are in order. What those changes should be, if any, depend on the Scriptural analysis. In the end this is something each person is responsible to God for regardless of how others feel. Jehovah would not have any one of us do less than listen to and follow a conscience that has put forth every effort to learn from God's most holy Scriptures, what we call the Bible. Considering the life and death nature of our subject, if I am predisposed in any direction it is in deference of letting God's STATED requirements stand as His entire word on the matter without imposing anything beyond that. Addressing and offering potential extensions of God's STATED requirements as though they may provide some guiding principle that each one should consider would also be appropriate. On the other hand, imposing UNSTATED prohibitions with the same force as we would impose STATED prohibitions is going beyond what is WRITTEN. And, please, don't do on with complaints about me requiring specific "though shall not" for every

possible sin! You know perfectly well that is neither my position nor my inclination! Such inclusions of yours are childish! For example, you write,

[RR] "We know eating blood by transfusions is wrong because the Bible condemns eating blood. Therefore HOW eating of blood is accomplished is beside the point of determining whether eating of blood was committed."

Assuming 1) eating ANY blood is wrong and 2) that medical transfusion of blood is EATING then of course "HOW eating of blood is accomplished is beside the point." But since points 1 and 2 are party to the question of our discussion then your comment is childish.

Indeed I have not, as you say, demanded an explicit "thou shalt not" for every possible use of blood..." I have sought and continue to seek sound evidence for a prohibition that we teach under pain of shunning or death. So far I have found no such evidence. If I find this evidence, fine. If I do not, that is fine too. More important is the honest, sincere and thorough effort to look for, perceived and do God's will regardless of any personal inclinations. In the end love of God must be paramount.

Regarding your summary points:

You assert a failure to counter the following the numbered items. My comments follow each one:

1.) That blood is equated with life and thus incontestably sacred. Life is in the blood *while in living animals.* It doesn't become sacred due to the animal being killed.

Life to is sacred, but that does not mean we must have EXPRESS permission to use it from day to day as we see fit. We must only make sure to abide by what God prohibits us from using our life for and also make sure we use our life in ways he mandates. Otherwise we do not need his EXPRESS permission to use life for specific things from day to day as though otherwise we are somehow rebelling against some unwritten principle based on the sanctity of life.

2.) While God gave animals into man's hand as food, He retained blood of living creatures as His alone. Again, indisputably sacred.

Though animals are living and though God has always held life sacred, there is no indication that God felt it ungodly that humans kill animals or use the body parts of animals. Abel killed animals without God's express permission, and God himself gave de facto permission to use animal parts by providing animal skin clothing to Adam and Eve. As for blood, a prohibition against eating blood cannot be extended to ANY use of blood anymore than either of us could logically assert that Adam and Eve would have acted sacrilegiously had they enjoyed shade provided from a Tree they were prohibited from EATING from.

3.) The very same texts show that human blood was viewed by God as even more sacred.

More sacred? You should reconsider this before I comment. Certainly God expects obedience regardless of the object of His expressed will. The question is, what is God's will regarding donor blood for transfusion and whether we can prove that Scripturally. I am not trying to say one sacred thing is more of less sacred than any other. Either God prohibits donor blood for medical transfusion or he does not or we cannot prove either.

4.) Scripture explicitly prohibits eating blood and contains no limitation to only blood from killed animals.

Deuteronomy 14:21 disputes this assertion.

5.) The law against eating animals which had died on their own demonstrates that it wasn't the killing which caused the prohibition.

But God provision of unbled animal carcasses as food does speak to how HE FELT about eating unslaughtered and unbled animals aside from the requirements of the Mosaic Law. This is precisely the question of the Noachian Law! That is, did it prohibit eating of unbled flesh of animals that died of themselves?

6.) Scripture shows that due to life being in the blood it could only be poured out.

The Noachian Law does not prescribe this whereas the Mosaic Law does. Applying it to the Noachian Law is no less than you interposing the Mosaic Law upon it as if the two are the same. IN effect you are saying, "Look, the two laws say the same thing because I say they do!" God had already given de facto permission to use animal parts. We have no reason to believe that until the Mosaic Law that God required ANYONE to adhere to any other standard.

7.) The Apostolic decree continued the prohibition as stated in Moses' writings with the all-encompassing command to "abstain from blood" again with no limitation to only blood from dead animals.

The question is what establishes the meaning of the Apostolic Decree. Since this is the question then just asserting what provides the meaning is fallacious. Also, there is nothing all-encompassing about the Apostolic Decree. If we held ourselves to that standard then we would shun brothers who looked at, felt of, smelled of or thought about blood because each one is an antithesis of abstaining from blood.

8.) because the testimony of Scripture shows that humans understood that blood was sacred since they never used blood in any way which was not expressly approved by God.

This is your interpretation. Here I will point out your equivocal response to my request that you evidence your claim that the Bible speaks of blood sacrifices from the time of Abel. You replied,

[RR] "...Abel's sacrifice meant an animal's blood was obviously shed..."

Because an animal's blood was shed does not mean that animal's blood was part of any sacrifice, and your assertion was that the Bible speaks of blood sacrifices from the time of Abel, not that Abel killed an animal! Obviously Abel killed an animal! The question is can you evidence that he or anyone else in his day used the blood OF A KILLED ANIMAL as part of a sacrifice? Can you?

Your brother,

Marvin

From: Ron Rhoades to Marvin Shilmer

Date: Sat, 29 Mar 2003 19:14 EST

Marvin,

What follows is an in depth consideration of the arguments contained in your last response concerning the Scriptural prohibition against blood use. I do sincerely apologize for the delay. I will send it in 3 parts.

>[You wrote]: There are several misunderstandings in your replies of my views...In no particular order, here they are: 1. I do not assert that Jehovah gave Noah permission to use blood in any way. I only assert what I said before, that had Noah used blood for mundane uses he would not have been in violation of any STATED prohibition since the only STATED prohibition had to do with eating blood. Also, whether you like this or not, logic dictates that I maintain this view until the question is settled of whether the stated prohibition on eating blood was de facto prohibition on using blood in other ways.<

You have habitually distracted from the scriptural basis for recognizing that any use of blood was prohibited to mankind. Logic and correct spiritual thinking requires that we first, recognize the scriptural fact that there does not need to be a STATED prohibition before a trespass against God occurs. Second, we must acknowledge the fact that if there was no permission given then faithful humans had no right to use blood at all; the de facto prohibition is clearly discerned due to the sanctity of blood, it's being only God's and never being placed within mankind's dominion/prerogative. Third, you distract from the fact that everything in Scripture confirms this understanding: There is no record of Noah or any faithful human using blood for mundane purposes and no one ever used blood without express approval from God. Further laws all speak of a total abstinence from blood use for those who want to please God. All of these *scriptural* facts logically prove that using blood in other ways was prohibited. Only by failing to acknowledge, or distracting from, these facts can you persist in your position. Additionally, you have not shown here how I have presented any "misunderstanding of your views" in this.

>[MS]: 2. I do not presume that Noah used blood for anything prior to the Noachian Law of Genesis 9. I have only asserted that God's STATED requirements in the Noachian Law do not make uses other than eating blood an act of disobedience. Again, I know you dispute this latter statement so I will address it later in my reply.<

God's STATED law to Adam was not to "eat" fruit from the tree. Would touching or other uses of the fruit have been an act of disobedience? Eve's words to Satan show that Adam and Eve evidently concluded that this "made other uses an act of disobedience" (Gen.3:3). The similarity between the law to not eat the forbidden fruit and not eating blood has not been lost on Bible scholars. In both instances God placed authority into man's hands while limiting the permission to eat, retaining a specific portion for Himself. I think that in both cases logic and reason would demand the conclusion that there was a de facto prohibition against *any* use of what was retained by God.

>[MS]:4. Aspects of our discussion that seemed to me as irrelevant or that could be subjective and likely to add confusion I have not replied to details you offered precisely for that reason. An example has to do with blood transfusions between some unborn twins. I explained why I was leaving off an examination of such a perspective for the time being, but you seem to make an issue of this as though I am behaving illogically or dishonestly, or avoiding your views altogether. I do not understand this on your part.<

You presented DMT twins as evidence supporting your view. I presented objective facts as evidence showing that this could not be used to support your position since the cases were not parallel. It is only logical for me to point out that you failed to respond with any facts supporting your claims, thereby showing that you have no real evidence.

>[MS]: I simply feel it is best to come to a clearer picture of the Biblical view first, and thereafter look to creation for what we can learn on the subject, if anything. ... We should determine the objective and then look at the subjective to see what that teaches us about the objective. That is, the subjective might help us to extend our understanding of the objective, but the subjective cannot establish the objective.<

I have no disagreement with this view nor have my arguments given any reason to believe otherwise. My arguments are based on clear, objective Scripture statements. Any subjective reasoning was supported by objective facts and can be adjusted if further facts present themselves.

>[MS]: Your belief that medical transfusion of blood is ungodly is that you feel this is using blood in a way God did not give express permission for and we need express permission for specific uses of blood. Furthermore you contend an explicit prohibition on eating ANY blood and that medical transfusion is eating blood and therefore in direct contradiction of God's specific prohibition against eating blood. This means that for two reasons you feel blood transfusions are ungodly: 1) we do not have express permission to do it and 2) it falls under an express prohibition not to eat blood.<

As you go on to note in part, the reason I believe that medical transfusion of blood is prohibited is:

- 1) Because Jehovah explicitly commanded Christians to “abstain from” and “keep away from blood.”
- 2) Because the stated reason for the prohibition was that God retained blood as sacred, belonging to Him, withholding it from human use. Since He placed it in such a sacred position, it would take His express permission to be used.
- 3) The specific use addressed with Noah was the willful eating of blood to sustain life. I have seen no logical way to avoid the conclusion that transfusions are in fact “eating” and thus fall under every explicit scriptural statement prohibiting its use.
- 4) Every Scriptural law and statement concerning the substance of blood confirms this understanding that blood itself was sacred, belonging only to God and this could be used only with his express approval.

>[MS]: Your conclusion that blood is sacred is built on the following premises:

1. Blood belongs to God.
2. Blood is life
3. The right to use blood is withheld from man.

I personally would add the word “only” to the first point and add the Scriptural fact that the *only* approved use of blood was in atonement sacrifice as a fourth evidence. But, I think that your points are a fair summation of what the whole of Scripture teaches regarding blood. The explicit prohibitions then soundly confirm the sacredness of blood.

>[MS]: The first premise (blood belongs to God) is irrelevant to our discussion because everything belongs to God yet He does not require that we have His express approval for specific uses of each of His specific creations. "To Jehovah belong the earth and that which fills it, The productive land and those dwelling in it."-- Psalm 24:1<

It's not my premise that is irrelevant but your argument. You're speciously mixing a general statement of supreme ownership over things which God has explicitly placed within mankind's authority alongside a statement of prohibition and exclusive ownership by God. This tactic can only be described as frivolous. As usual with misinterpretations your view causes God's word to contradict itself.

Ge 1:29: “And God went on to say: “Here I have given to YOU all vegetation bearing seed which is on the surface of the whole earth and every tree.” (Cf. Gen.1:26; 2:16)

Ps.8:6-8 You make him dominate over the works of your hands; Everything you have put under his feet.

Psalm 115:16 “As regards the heavens, to Jehovah the heavens belong, But the earth he has given to the sons of men.”

As with Satan's use of Scripture, your use here is simply a misuse of Scripture because it requires an ignorance

of the substance of Scripture teaching and it wickedly distracts from God's words which deny your interpretation.

Scripture makes it undeniably clear that while Jehovah did place many things within man's relative jurisdiction, God did not relinquish His ownership of blood and that He viewed it as life, explicitly showing that it ONLY belonged to Him. This principle will continue to conclusively argue against your position until you can come up with even the slightest Scriptural indication that God ever placed blood within mankind's authority as he did other things.

>[MS]: The second premise (blood is life) would support a conclusion that blood is sacred insofar as it is representative of life. But this sanctity does not Scripturally establish that we need God express permission for uses beyond specifically stated prohibitions. On the question of whether one stated prohibition is de facto prohibition of other uses not specified, it is best to see if this agrees with other Biblical models. Two that come to mind are life and the Tree of Knowledge. Both are/were sacred and both have/had prohibitions on their use. Life is sacred, and each of us has life...Regardless of the sanctity of life, beyond specific prohibitions both of us are free to do things with life that we do not have God's express permission for...In the case of blood transfusion I do not contend we have God's approval for it but simply question whether we can prove it has God's disapproval, which means we could Scripturally shun Christians for accepting such.<

Your primary failure has always been in ignoring and distracting from the fact that *principles* are the controlling factor, not the "stated prohibitions." Prohibitions are only specific applications of principle. I have previously demonstrated the Scriptural fact that we do not need a "specific prohibition" before we understand that something is a sin against God. Therefore, your whole argument here is an irrelevant distraction. First because no one has claimed that "one prohibition causes other de facto prohibitions." And second, because blood transfusions are, in fact, a direct breaking of the prohibition against eating blood.

As with your above response, when God has placed sacred things within man's prerogative we do not need specifically expressed permission for each and every use as long as we remain within the God given principles governing their use. While The Life Principle (ZOE) is only in Jehovah's hands, He has placed in our control the relative use of our life (BIOS) to the extent allowed within His principles. (Ec.2:24; 3:10; 5:18-19). THIS IS NOT THE CASE WITH BLOOD which Scripturally was never placed within man's prerogative. Quite the opposite, blood was specifically withheld. Scripture everywhere demonstrates that we do indeed need God's express permission to use blood for any purpose.

The two things you mention here are good examples to show that your argument is comparing unrelated things in order to support your view. God has given us the right to decide how to use our life, within the bounds of his principles. But, did God ever give Adam any control over the use of the Tree of Knowledge? As you yourself note below, Adam and Eve correctly understood the principle behind God's command because her interpretation was that she could not even "touch" the tree of knowledge (Gen.3:3). Similarly, we have been given relative control over our life yet we were given absolutely no control regarding blood. Both the tree of knowledge and blood was completely withheld from mankind's prerogative, thus it could not be used at all without express approval by God.

>[MS]: Life is sacred, and each of us has life...Regardless of the sanctity of life, beyond specific prohibitions both of us are free to do things with life that we do not have God's express permission for. For example, neither of us can fornicate without breaking God's will because fornication is specifically prohibited.<

The Scriptural evidence is that God has, to various extent, placed sacred things (earth, plants, animals & our lives) into the relative control of mankind. Principles govern to what extent we can use these. Our personal life was placed in our control since we were given free will. But blood is different: Scripture shows that He has never handed over even relative control of blood. On the other hand, you have absolutely no Scriptural support for your personal reasonings.

True to your pattern, you are ignoring the vital matter of Scriptural principles and as a result draw incorrect conclusions. You are absolutely wrong when you claim that "beyond specific prohibitions we are free to do

things with life that we do not have God's express permission for." Was there a specific prohibition against fornication before the Mosaic Law? No. Yet, Joseph conclusively knew fornication was a sin against God because faithful humans "perceived" this law by knowing God's feelings demonstrated by His actions. Repeatedly Scripture demonstrates that God's people did not need a "specific prohibition" to discern infractions against God's will.

>[MS]: In the case of blood transfusion I do not contend we have God's approval for it but simply question whether we can prove it has God's disapproval, which means we could Scripturally shun Christians for accepting such.<

As demonstrated by this paragraph, your whole argument is one based on an "appeal of ignorance." This is the standard appeal for those who do not want to change their belief while at the same time they ignore clear scriptural evidence which *should* be enough proof.

The Scriptural commands: "do not eat blood" and "abstain from blood" are not hard to understand. The doctrine forbidding blood transfusions is strictly Scriptural and any trespass of this doctrine shows extreme disrespect for Christ's atoning blood as the only Scriptural use of blood by Christians. Being listed in the Apostolic decree alongside fornication and idolatry shows that a faithful Christian would shun any who break this law. Any view contrary to this is an act of apostasy from the true faith.

>[MS]: We also know that God himself taught His human creation to make use of animal parts when he constructed clothing out of animal skins for Adam and Eve. This was de facto permission to use animal parts and blood is an animal part.<

Your assertion of a de facto permission to use blood by pre-flood humans is purely speculative and flies in the face of all Scriptural evidence. Nor would it be relevant to God's people today since from the time of Noah we have God's clear prohibition explicitly enunciated as Law.

You have absolutely no Scriptural evidence that faithful pre-flood humans put blood to any use. Quite the opposite, from Adam's time they recognized the importance of blood as representing Life (Gen.4:10,11; 37:21-28; 42:21,22). There is no Scriptural record of any faithful human ever using blood for mundane purposes and no one ever used blood without express approval from God. Further laws all speak of a total abstinence from blood use for God's people. All of these scriptural facts logically prove that using blood in other ways was prohibited. Only by failing to acknowledge, or distracting from, these facts can you persist in your position.

>[MS]: The Tree of Knowledge was sacred in that Jehovah restricted Adam from eating (or touching) its fruit. Did that mean Adam needed God's express permission to sit under this tree and enjoy its shade? Could Adam have enjoyed this tree's fall color by looking upon it without God's express approval? Could Adam enjoy this tree's aroma without God's express approval? Had Adam done any of these would he have committed some sacrilegious act? The answer is, maybe yes and maybe no. Since none of us can read God's mind then insisting that any of these is sacrilegious would be judging a matter that rightfully belongs to God. These matters would be for each individual to decide and reap consequences at God's hands rather than any man's.<

Again, you ignore the fact that recognizing principles does allow us to know God's thinking to a necessary degree. We must keep in mind that, even without a specific prohibition, Adams' understanding that the specific command meant that they should not even "touch" the tree destroys your foundation argument that we would need a specific statement to extend the prohibition to other uses!! Controlling principles reveal God's views concerning other uses, as it did Adam here. Common sense and Godly fear would decide whether we should even sit under/near it at all. Similar to this are the measures we take to avoid even the temptation to commit fornication, theft & etc. IMO, I would need some strong indication that God wanted me to sit in its shade before I'd even approach it (like Him placing a chair under it!). Remember, Eve's trouble began when she simply admired its beauty (Gen.3:6).

Your argument here is good for showing the reason that we cannot demand a doctrinal prohibition concerning blood fractions, but it's completely irrelevant to the use of blood itself (or of making use of the Tree) since we have a specific command and principles prohibiting its actual use. The tree was beautiful and if God allowed the Tree to put off a beautiful smell that wafted through the garden, some could reasonably conclude that we had

God's express approval to enjoy it. In that case no one could make a doctrine either for or against smelling or looking at it. It is similar with fractions since God has allowed blood fractions to pass between systems. But, there is *nothing* even hinting at God's approval when it comes to blood use itself!

>[MS]: So, assuming blood is sacred in that it 'is life,' this does not mean God expects us to understand prohibitions on its use beyond what He has specified Himself. That is, as long as our use of blood is not in violation of his requirements then we have not treated blood or, more importantly, God's will with impunity or sacrilegiously.<

Your view here is totally contrary to Scripture and is simply your personal, self-serving, deceptive, speculation. The many scriptural examples where humans were judged by their obedience to principles without stated laws resoundingly and conclusively disproves your view here. Scripture shows that God does expect us to use principles to understand unstated laws!!

Did Adam think he could even touch the tree since he had no "specific statement" prohibiting touching? Did Joseph think in this self-serving manner when he refused to commit fornication? Would he have earned God's approval if he insisted on a specific prohibition? Even without a specific prohibition, the wicked angels should have know that it was wrong to take on human form and marry humans based on their "natural state" (Jude 6). Without a "specific prohibition" the Israelites should have known better than to associate with the Midianites.

You distract from the fact that transfusions definitely are in violation of His stated requirements! In spite of your claim below, you do demand an explicit "thou shall not" before admitting any prohibition. Yet this idea is soundly refuted by the nature of principles and Scripture examples. Clear Scriptural principles and statements revealing God's views are enough to create a prohibition without it being spelled out in written detail. God expects humans to use their God given intelligence to perceive what God's standards are.

>[MS]: Your third premise (The right to use blood is withheld from man) would prove your conclusion that medical transfusion is ungodly, if it is true. As far as the Noachian Law is concerned, a person might feel your premise is intimated there yet they could conclude otherwise too. Why? The context of the Noachian prohibition on eating blood does not support your blanket assertion here because the prohibition was on eating and the only eating offered to Noah in the context of the Noachian Law was that of living animals he could kill for food. That is, the context does not discuss eating of animals that had died of themselves and therefore would not require slaughtering. This leaves open the possibility that the Noachian prohibition against eating blood was only applicable to animals killed for food. If we concluded this based on solely on the Noachian Law then we would be reading a conclusion into the text. It can only be concluded from independent confirmation (i.e., another text that addresses it).<

In this whole paragraph you have simply distracted from the actual context. It is obvious that the point of the context is that, just as God previously did plants, He now placed living animals completely "into man's hand," but specifically withheld any such prerogative for blood. Every point you raise is soundly refuted by the context and proved to be personal speculation.

But, we have been over this before. First, while you wish to focus on the specific prohibition you completely ignore the Governing principle in the context—the *reason*—behind the prohibition. Yes, the specified law was not to eat blood but the stated reason was that while living animals were given to humans the blood was withheld, it represented Life and so belonged exclusively to God. This principle applies to all blood, not just to blood of killed animals. You must distract from this point or your position falls. This is the context and it does in fact support a blanket prohibition on using blood without Jehovah's express approval.

Secondly, your claim that "the context of the Noachian prohibition was only on eating blood of animals men could kill" is incorrect and misleading. There is no such limitation in the context. I previously pointed out that throughout history many interpreters understood these words to mean eating an animal while alive! The prohibition obviously applied to blood from killed animals, but as worded the command itself would also apply to eating blood from living animals. This is the conclusion demanded by the governing principle. The context also included human blood. The very same principle applied to human blood showing that it also was sacred i.e., withheld from man's prerogative. The blood was the soul in both man and animals while LIVING. Therefore, the context shows that *all* blood belonged to God only and could not be used without express approval!!

The soul—the blood was only God’s and the power to determine its use was retained as His only. Therefore, contextually, any use of blood by humans outside of God’s expressed approval was unacceptable, whether it came from an animal killed for food or removed from a living one.

You properly point out that we need to confirm our interpretation from additional Scriptural evidence. The complete witness of Scripture conclusively proves our position to be correct. There is absolutely no record that Noah’s descendants ever felt they could unilaterally use blood in other ways. The Mosaic Code only continued the Noachian ban and explicitly confirmed the extent of the ban as meaning total non-use of *any* blood without God’s express approval. Then the Apostolic Decree not only reflects, but seemingly “intensifies” both the previous mandates for those outside the Mosaic Law. Rather than an explicit association with “food,” it stresses the sacredness by requiring a complete unqualified “abstaining.” Therefore, *every* Scriptural statement indicates that all blood was sacred and not given to man to use as he saw fit. No faithful human ever used blood without an express approval from God. This is the testimony of Scripture. You must continue to improperly parse the Scriptures in order to avoid their united testimony against the use of blood without God’s express permission.

Any conclusion which says that transfusions are permitted would certainly have to ignore the overwhelming testimony of Scripture context. Everything in Scripture testifies to the fact that your conclusion is unscriptural, based only on *your* speculation. Without evidence of the express approval of God for a particular use you are clearly acting on your own opinion.

>[MS]: Also, the only “withholding” spoken of has to do with eating...a prohibition on EATING is not a blanket prohibition on USING. The only explicit withholding had to do with eating. It is an assumption to read more into the Noachian Law.<

Again, you are distracting from the point and improperly focusing attention on the specific prohibition only. I never claimed that the “prohibition against eating” caused a blanket ban on using. What causes the prohibition on using blood is the governing principle and the fact that blood was not placed into man’s hand as contrasted with the giving of all *living* animals into man’s control.

It is clear that while LIVING, all animals were placed “in man’s hand”--to be used as he wished. Yet blood was expressly removed from this prerogative, it was retained as sacred, belonging ONLY to God. There is no way we can logically omit any blood from this exclusive sanctity whether from living, dead or killed souls.

To help us see whether the “withholding” principle was a “blanket prohibition” we can look at the contiguous principle--what was covered in God “giving” animals into man’s hand? Reason and scripture usage tells us that this principle went beyond the explicit permission to “eat.” Humans now had the total right or prerogative to and use animals at their discretion. Humans no longer needed express permission for any particular use of animals (fertilizer, dog food, bait & etc.). It would be foolish to say that this “giving” ONLY covered “eating” flesh and that humans could not do anything but eat animal flesh once they killed it. It is just as unreasonable to claim that the “withholding” of blood only covered “eating.” It was a blanket “giving” of animals into man’s hand and it is similarly a blanket “withholding” of the blood from man’s hands. Blood could not be used for any reason not expressly approved by God since it remained His exclusively.

>[MS]: This raises the question of whether anything else in the Bible indicates God's prohibition to Noah was limited to eating blood taking from killing animals for food. Several times you too request for Biblical evidence that God anywhere approved of using blood for non-sacrificial purposes. The text is Deuteronomy 14:21 “....”

I think that we must keep in focus that the issue is whether man was given the *right* or prerogative to use blood in any way he chose without God’s express approval. It is NOT just finding an example of where blood was used with God’s permission, especially an example involving mitigating circumstances.

You also must be forgetting that this Scripture destroys your argument since it proves that the prohibition was not limited to animals killed for food! This Scripture explicitly states that faithful followers of Jehovah could NOT eat flesh from unbled animals which had died on their own: "You shall not eat anything that dies of itself.”

This applied to all humans who wished to worship Jehovah as confirmed by the Apostolic decree! This is evidence that the Noachian prohibition included blood from animals which had died on their own.

On the other hand, your example has no relevancy in determining the extent of the Noachian mandate since it is clearly an *exception* due to extenuating circumstances. This exception can only be applied to the situation under the Mosaic system where God was dealing with people associated with only one nation!

(end part 1)

From: Ron Rhoades to Marvin Shilmer

Date: Sat, 29 Mar 2003 19:15 EST

(part 2)

>[MS]: Since our discussion is about God's will and WHAT HE holds as sacred versus sacrilegious regarding blood, the text of Deuteronomy 14:21 is significant because it prohibits Israelites and proselytes from eating unbled flesh of animals that died of themselves yet it provides this same unbled flesh EXPRESSLY for food to those outside requirements of the Mosaic Law. These animals had not been killed and they held their full measure of blood. Since 1) God has never ended the Noachian Law and 2) since the Noachian Law is God's standard and 3) since that law is applicable to all mankind then these whom God provided unbled animal carcasses to were those who were, in His eyes, still under the Noachian Law though they were not under the Mosaic Law. Unless we can successfully argue that God was intentionally aiding and abetting WHAT HE considered a sacrilegious act (eating an unbled animal carcass that died of itself) then we must accept that, in God's eyes, eating this flesh was 1) not a sacrilegious act TO HIM nor 2) was it a sacrilegious act for those He only held accountable to the Noachian Law....it stands as confirmation that the Noachian Law was not intended to prohibit the use (or eating) of blood aside from eating the blood of animals killed for food.<

In your final conclusion you commit a logical fallacy (False Dilemma) because you ignore a different and Scriptural conclusion. Both parts of your conclusion are in error because you ignore explicit teaching of Scripture and fail to view Scripture as harmonious on its blood prohibitions.

1. If it were not a sacrilegious act He wouldn't have commanded His worshipers not to eat it. 2. Explicit Scripture makes it clear that the prohibition against eating any blood applied to all who wanted to please God whether they were under the Noachian or Mosaic Laws.

It is clear that, under the Mosaic Law, Jehovah did approve of his servants providing unbled meat to unbelievers to eat *when it was impossible to carry out sacred law* since the blood could not be removed. He manifestly did not view this selling as a breach of blood's sanctity on the part of His people. But, you must make an unsupported logical assumption to claim that this exception meant eating blood was not a sacrilegious act in God's view or permitted for *worshipers* outside the Mosaic Law. Nor does it show that God *approved* of non-believers profane practices.

First, as already covered, the immediate context clearly shows that God did view the eating of this unbled flesh as sacrilege since He forbade His people from eating it! Every mention, including this one, of eating unbled flesh shows that it makes the individual unclean and unholy in God's sight (Lev.17:15; 22:8; Ezek.4:14). Only those viewed by God and his people as on the level of "dogs" would eat unbled meat (Ex.22:31). You cannot make any claim that God did not view this as as sacrilegious without totally ignoring God's own statements in the immediate context.

When God gave permission to sell unbled flesh for non-believers to eat there was no lessening of blood's sacredness. Similarly, when God gave permission for humans to shed a murderer's blood there was no lessening of blood's sacredness (Gen.9:5). These are just cases where the circumstances dictate an exception to sacred law. Jehovah showed consideration to his servants in allowing unclean meat to be put to use by selling it to those who had no clean standing with Jehovah nor moral compunction regarding blood. This tells us nothing different regarding Jehovah's view of blood as sacred.

In reality, this is no different than God *providing* animal flesh to humans to eat knowing full well that, even when bled, significant amounts of blood remain and is eaten. Would it be reasonable to draw the conclusion that God was either "aiding humans to do WHAT HE considered a sacrilegious act" or that purposely eating coagulated blood was "not a sacrilegious act?" No, because Jehovah has given explicit commands stating otherwise. Being concerned with non-believers eating blood would be improperly viewing the prohibition as a dietary one rather than a moral one required of anyone desiring communion with God.

As for your second conclusion, Scripture denies your claim that the prohibition against eating unbled carcasses

did not apply to those under the Noachian Law. You ignore the Scriptural fact that the Apostolic Decree expressly referred to the Mosaic Law in extending the prohibition on blood as applicable to all faithful mankind (Ac.15:21). In turn, the Mosaic Law had simply continued the same command found in the Noachian and based on the same exact principle! This shows that when it came to abstaining from blood God did not require more from those under the Mosaic Law than He did in the Noachian code. Rather, it proves that He did consider it sacrilegious for worshipers outside the Mosaic Law to even eat meat from animals which died on their own. It would remove them from communion with God.

Additionally, before any foreigner could be acceptable to God they had to avoid eating any blood at all including unbled meat from an animal which had died on its own (Lev.17:8ff). This shows that Jehovah did not accept as worshipers any who did not avoid blood and that this unclean meat was being sold to non-believers, not to believers who were only under the Noachian code.

The Scriptural conclusion would actually look like this: 1.) As confirmed especially by the Apostolic Decree, eating any unbled flesh would be sacrilege for anyone, whether under the Mosaic Law or the Noachian. 3.) When an animal died on its own, and it was impossible to remove the blood, Jehovah did not view it as a sacrilegious act for believers to dispose of the carcass by selling the unbled flesh to non-believers to eat. 3.) He did not concern Himself with the profane practices of those already excluded from His communion.

Ultimately, God's providing unbled meat to unbelievers has absolutely no relevancy to whether faithful individuals could accept a blood transfusion. No faithful worshiper of Jehovah was ever allowed to purposely eat any blood whatsoever whether they were under the Mosaic Law or not.

>[MS]: Your previous comments on the relevance of Deuteronomy 14:21 do not address the fact that this is an unsolicited act on God's part and that He is the one providing expressly for SOMEONE (people) to eat unbled flesh...a unilateral and intentional provision from Jehovah to persons outside what he required under the Mosaic Law...this ACT OF GOD refutes the idea that GOD prohibited the use (or EATING!) of blood when it came from an animal that had not been slaughtered.<

Your argument fails on many points because you misrepresent the context as well as the congruent teaching of Scripture. You first commit a logical fallacy here in jumping from the situation where, through accident, blood could not be removed from an approved substance to the situation of purposely eating blood itself. This is the same as drawing the illogical conclusion that we could purposely eat coagulated blood just because God made the provision that we could eat meat with unremovable blood in it.

Similarly, you take a speculative and unscriptural jump when you assert that this means that the Noachian law excluded the eating of unbled animals which had not been killed. There is no discernible connection between this allowance and the extent of the Noachian prohibition. As previously enunciated, EVERY mention of blood in Scripture shows that it was only used with express permission from God and thus argues against your view!

Even this Scripture further argues against your contention: If it had been previously understood by Noah's faithful descendants that eating unbled flesh was OK then there would have been no need for God to express this exception to those now under the Mosaic Law. The very presence of this exception demonstrates that faithful individuals knew there was no previous precedent for selling any unbled meat to anyone!

The Scriptures I previously provided showing that God "unilaterally and intentionally" "permits" unbelievers to go their own *wicked* way without His interruption did explain, in part, why God would let his people provide animals which had died on their own to non-believers to eat. (Ac.14:16; 17:30; Rom.3:25; 9:22; Eph.4:18) The simple reason is that God "overlooked" and "permitted" these non-believers to continue in their profane course. This in no way implies that God "approved" of their course!

Similarly, God's "provision" in Deut. 14 is not an approval by God to eat blood. God commands Christians to pay their taxes knowing full well that it will be used for disgusting purposes like warfare. This is a "unilateral and intentional provision from Jehovah." Does this mean Jehovah approves of warfare today? Like your argument, that would be an unreasonable conclusion that could only be maintained by ignoring clear statements of Scripture.

Jehovah, "unilaterally and intentionally" provided flesh to humans to eat, which always contained some

unremovable blood. Did this mean that God did not consider blood to be sacred? Or that it wasn't sacrilege to intentionally eat blood? We could, IF we ignored God's own explicit words on the matter.

Jesus "expressly" commanded Peter to pay the head tax which was designed to promote Roman cults and pagan temples. Was Jesus "aiding and abetting" idolatry? Was he telling us that idolatry was not a sacrilegious act? Or does it just mean that he recognized that Jehovah was unconcerned with non-believers' actions since they were alienated from Him anyway?

Jesus continued to "unilaterally and intentionally" give Judas the contribution even though he knew Judas was using the money wrongly. Does this mean that Jesus was lessening the importance of the money? Or just that he felt it was not time to act? (Jn.6:64).

God continues to willingly provide the sunshine and food for wicked humanity knowing full well they will use them to profane His standards. While this is not a direct parallel to a specific provision, the same reasoning is present. Could we conclude that this means God doesn't really think there is anything wrong with what they are doing with his provisions? Ridiculous argument! God overlooks the actions of those acting outside His laws but will still hold them accountable for how they used His provisions.

Your argument here also continues to depend on your personal opinion that *acceptable worshipers* could be found outside of the Mosaic code who would be eating this unbled flesh with God's approval. I have already shown this view to be unscriptural (2Ki.5:15; Zec.8:23; De.4:7,8; Isa.45:14; 56:6,7). Therefore your use of this scripture has absolutely no bearing on the propriety of Christians accepting transfusions.

>[MS]: I would assert that outside explicit and very clear evidence to the contrary we should always assume that God ALWAYS treats sacred things as he would have us treat them. That is, regardless of how other people may act or what they may believe, we should always assume God has acted as he would have us act. This is what makes the text of Deuteronomy 14:21 important.<

I would entirely agree with you here. God's actions constitute express will. God's actions here, first show that those who wanted to be true worshipers would not eat blood even when, through no fault, it was impossible to remove properly. The only parallel between this verse the Noachian mandate is that true worshipers would not eat blood at all.

Secondly, in the circumstance where blood could not be removed from an approved substance He has made an exception. His worshipers could sell the tainted substance to those outside of his communion to eat without his intervention.

However, I see very little parallel between this case and blood transfusions nor do I see any relevancy in the principle behind this allowance. How does this exception apply to any purposeful eating of blood itself by a righteous individual? One is the direct eating (or use) of blood itself and the other is eating of an approved food which inadvertently includes the blood. One is where the donor died and blood could not be removed, and the other is the intentional use of blood itself. One has to do with righteous individuals' willing use and the other explicitly applies to use by "foreigners," those outside of communion with god.

The principle behind this exception can certainly find some application in various situations today such as bone marrow transplants and serums. However, it is IMPOSSIBLE to find any excuse or allowance for a faithful individual accepting a blood transfusion in this Scripture. This case is irrelevant to the question of accepting blood transfusions, unless we accept your unscriptural personal speculations regarding who are acceptable worshipers. Or your unsupported assertion that this allowance under the Mosaic Law is to be used to explain the extent of the Noachian mandate.

>[MS]: Finally, in your answers to me you have not defended what we teach on the subject of blood; you have defended your personal views, which I am not too concerned about.<

Ridiculous! You're really grasping at straws with these next arguments and wasting my time. My "personal views" are in complete agreement with Witness teachings and everything I have presented clearly supports Witness teachings.

>[MS]: For example, 1. Your assertion that we must have God's express permission for uses of blood aside from sacrificial condemns what we teach as false because our policy on blood allows us to accept certain uses of blood without God's express approval. When our blood is removed for medical testing this is a use of blood that God has not given express promotion for.<

Nonsense! My argument condemns no teaching of the WTS. You confuse the idea of "allowing" with the idea of "approving." Perhaps you do this intentionally since you obviously cannot find any *Scriptural* evidence which speaks against our *doctrine*. The WTS takes no doctrinal stand, pro or con, on the appropriateness of allowing blood to be tested. They leave it entirely up to personal conscience since there is nothing in the Scriptures which definitely precludes the examining of blood properties before discarding. (w10/15/00; 30,31, w2/1/97; 29, w6/15/78; 30).

Most Witnesses personally do not view examining or studying blood and then discarding it as a violation of God's law. This may depend on how strict a definition of "use" we apply, but, there is no material using up or consumption of the substance itself. In fact, the natural process set up by Jehovah in the passing of fractions from mother to fetus must involve some biological analysis and manipulation. Is it a violation of blood's sanctity to examine an animal's blood for disease before eating the flesh? Is the study of the wonderful properties of blood a "use" of blood which shows a lack of respect for the sanctity of blood? Is there a clear violation of principles regarding the sanctity of blood here? I'm not in the position to be so hyper-critical, so I'm happy to let that decision be between you and Jehovah. And the WTS feels the same way. Either way you decide, it has no bearing on the appropriateness of eating blood by injecting it into another person which is directly prohibited by Scriptural principle and Law.

>[MS]: The act of taking blood, fractionating it into red cells, plasma, etc and then fractionating it again into lesser components like hemoglobin is all using blood. Our use of byproducts of all this manipulation of blood is supporting a use of blood that does not have God's express approval.<

We have been over this before. The fact that in creation Jehovah naturally allows blood to be manipulated, fractionated and passed to another individual's blood stream gives some individuals all the express approval needed to accept fractions derived from this use of blood. While most Witnesses have followed God's actions such as at De.14:21 and "overlooked" non-believers use of blood to make fractions, most have refused to intentionally allow their own blood to be used to this extent. Though again, the WTS leaves this completely up to the individual.

>[MS]: 2. When you object that I am "assuming the Mosaic Law contained "higher requirements" regarding blood" you are not objecting to me; you are objecting to our publication that says, "People of all nations were bound by the requirement at Genesis 9:3,4, but those under the [Mosaic] Law were held by God to a higher standard in adhering to that requirement than were foreigners and alien residents who had not become worshipers of Jehovah." (it-1 345 Blood; bracketed word added for clarification)<

Your tactic of trying to invent some dichotomy between what I have proven and the teaching of Witnesses is simply a distraction from the facts. As you do with the Scriptures, you here ignore the context of the Insight book and instead force your view into the text. First, as can be seen even from your partial quote, it was not speaking of a different standard between *true worshipers* under the Mosaic Law and *true worshipers* under the Noachian mandate. The "higher standard" spoken of was explicitly for "true worshipers" as opposed to that for those who were "NOT worshipers of Jehovah."

Second, the "higher standard" was not the difference between requirements of the Mosaic Law and requirements of the Noachian mandate concerning blood but, rather, a difference in the "standard of adhering" to the SAME requirement. All humans are bound by the same requirement of "abstaining from blood." All true worshipers are held to the same high standard of adhering to that requirement. The point in the Insight book was that God did not directly enforce His requirements on the unbelieving nations like he now did with believers under the Mosaic Law. The context was speaking of God enforcing the *death sentence* for those under the Mosaic Law while He ignored the violations of those outside His communion. It had nothing to do with a "higher" requirement regarding blood's sanctity.

Contrary to your contrived dichotomy, this is exactly what I have shown the Scriptures to teach: Jehovah has

permitted non-believers to continue in their profane course without His intervention, while true worshipers are held to a “higher standard” of obedience. Jehovah always held true worshipers immediately accountable, but in the case of the Mosaic Law they were subject to death. At the same time He did not hold non-believers immediately accountable, “overlooking” their profane use of blood. Your distractions and twisting of research material displays an increasing desperation as you see your arguments proven invalid or irrelevant.

>[MS]: This sentence makes it a legitimate question to ask: Does God require Christians to abstain from blood to the extent he expected of Noah and the nations of people that descended from him or does He require Christians to abstain from blood to the EXTENT that He required under a Law that His son's death abolished?<

Because you have misunderstood the sentence and the Scriptures your question is nonsensical in this context.

This is like asking: “Does God expect Christians to abstain from fornication to the extent he required of Joseph (or Noah) or to the extent required under the Mosaic Law?”

But, again, God himself gave us the answer. You just choose to ignore the clear Scriptural answer. God’s Law for Christians is the unequivocal: “Abstain from blood!” And “Keep from blood!” To make sure that Christians understood the EXTENT required, the Apostolic Decree explicitly referred to the Mosaic code as explaining its application (Ac.15:20,21). In turn, the Mosaic Law was based on the same exact principle found in the Noachian mandate.

Even though there are no explicitly stated pre-Mosaic laws against fornication and idolatry, is there really any doubt as to the extent of the commands against fornication and idolatry? No, because we can examine how the original principle was applied under the Mosaic Law. As Paul said, the Law made it clear what was a violation of God’s standards. Likewise, the Mosaic Law makes it clear to all true worshipers that accepting a blood transfusion is a direct violation of not only the explicit law not to eat blood but also the underlying principles.

>[MS]: The absurdity of your claims about whether, for instance, hemoglobin is food versus a red cell was to the extent that I did not and do not see an need to address it with any detail. The fact of the matter is that our digestive tract does not see hemoglobin or red cells; it sees protein, which is made up primarily of amino acids. The digestive system breaks proteins down into their individual amino acids. These are absorbed into the blood and carried to the cells of your body where they are reassembled into whatever protein is needed. Since the digestive tract does not discriminate between red cells and hemoglobin. Both are dealt with as protein, which means both are digested as protein.<

Yes, after re-examining my information and gathering more detailed facts I must concede that you are correct here. While there are studies which show that ingested blood proteins and even some whole plant and animal proteins can be absorbed whole, blood proteins lose their protection from being digested if found outside the blood stream. Some, if not the majority, would be catabolized in the GI track. It would be nice to find some proven scientific definition which helps us to understand why God excluded fractions from the blood prohibition. But, it is definitely impossible at this point to find a commonly accepted definition of what constitutes “food” which aligns with God’s demarcation.

My argument concerning “food” was not offered as the basis for our excluding fractions from our doctrine. As I originally stated, this argument is unneeded as a support for our doctrine, nor does it affect our position on fractions. We can only rely on what Jehovah has stated in Scripture and note His creative use to discern what might be excluded from the prohibition not to “eat” or what must be “abstained” from. While it is clear that God prohibited the use of blood, it is also undeniable that God has allowed fractions to pass from one blood system to another. Therefore, this knowledge demands that we adjust our doctrine, leaving the use of fractions up to personal conscience. Yet, there is no similar excuse for any use of the primary components of blood.

On the other hand, anyone who recognizes that blood fractions are food cannot reasonably argue against our doctrine which holds that transfusions of blood are a violation of God’s law against eating blood. Recognizing fractions as “food” and accepting *only* what Scripture states could only mean that we would have to abstain from fractions also. As I pointed out at the beginning of our conversation, any argument against our allowance of fractions only further destroys your position advocating transfusions.

>[MS]: Frankly, this entire aspect of our discussion is absurd for the reason that your logic, for example, that red cells is food but hemoglobin is not would mean that it is okay for us to buy and eat pudding made from blood that had first been fractionated into parts other than red cells, white cells, plasma and platelets but then stirred back together as a goulash of hemoglobin, protein membranes etc! The idea is too absurd on the face to merit serious discussion. Had Eve remained obedient to God and later one of her offspring had rebelled by cutting a limb off the Tree of Knowledge and took to separating it into minute fractions, had he offered these fractionated forms to Eve and she ate them in their fractionated state, would she have been faithful to God? Would she have been eating something FROM the Tree of Knowledge?<

What is absurd is your Strawman argument here. First, neither my argument nor my logic ever came close to sanctioning the separation and then recombining of blood fractions. Your concept would obviously be a sidestepping of God's command. This type of circumvention would better apply to your own logic which demands the view that since God didn't explicitly deny it, it must be OK. If you want to argue with God that His logic in allowing multiple blood fractions to pass to another human meant we could circumvent His Law by separating and recombining blood parts, go ahead. But, that's not my argument.

Second, your argument is a Strawman because it does not present the real reason that we allow the use of fractions. You must continue to distract from the fact that our view is based on what God Himself has expressed in His creation. You must distract from the fact that excluding fractions from the prohibition is not *our* own arbitrary idea. It is God's demarcation (my definition of food was only a possible explanation for this). Therefore, you can offer no valid argument against our view on fractions.

Your example of Eve and fractionated parts of the Tree is therefore invalid and absurd. God never allowed anyone to eat of any part of the Tree as He did with fractions. If He had then we would have had to accept that as an expression of approval by God. But, if this were the case, and we consequently excluded such fractions of that tree from our doctrinal prohibition, it certainly would be unreasonable to claim that our resultant view promoted the separating then reassembling and eating the fruit itself.

(end part 2)

From: Ron Rhoades to Marvin Shilmer

Date: Sat, 29 Mar 2003 19:16 EST

(part 3)

>[MS]: As for who God accepts, I know God accepted the worship Noah offered. Noah offered to God what is described at Acts 10:34 and 35 where Peter is recorded saying, "For a certainty I perceive that God is not partial, but in every nation the man that fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him." Noah feared God and acted in accordance to what God required of him. He was righteous, which means he was acceptable to God. God has not changed. For this reason persons whom God held to the same standards He required of Noah were likewise acceptable as long as they acted as Noah did.<

Certainly. Noah, all other patriarchs and their offspring who truly "feared God" and "worked righteousness" by obeying Jehovah's commands and living in accord with His righteous principles were acceptable worshipers. However, in this account, "for the first time" since the inception of Israel, Jehovah "took notice" of these descendants of Noah and invited them to learn His righteous requirements and become acceptable worshipers without having to first come under the Mosaic arrangement (Ac.15:7,14 NEB, NWT, RSV; Ac.11:1,18; Rom.1:5-6; 5:11, Cf. Ac.13:46-48; Eph.2:11-12,19). However, these Gentiles would still only be acceptable as worshipers through association with God's people; now the Christian arrangement. The requirement to avoid blood use never changed. If you admit that the requirement for these Gentile believers was the same as given to Noah then you can only concede that the mandate to Noah meant a total "abstention from blood" as averred in Moses' writings! (Ac.15:20,21). The only thing regarding blood use that was abolished by Christ's death was the literal sacrifices being replaced eternally by Christ's blood.

>[MS]: Some of these descendants of Noah may never have had any knowledge of Moses or Israel so they never had an opportunity to choose to put themselves under its higher requirements, the ones Jesus' death later abolished. They could have been living in what we call today North America. I have no reason to believe that these descendants of Noah we[re] unacceptable to God if they acted as Noah did. Do you?<

You have a bad habit of ignoring the context of Scripture and twisting it to fit your view. Acts 10:34ff actually disproves the viewpoint you are attempting to use it to support. This Scripture does not say that during the time of the Mosaic arrangement, descendants of Noah could be acceptable as true worshipers without association with Israel. To the contrary, it is pointing out that "for the *first* time" God "turned his attention to" the gentiles. For the *first time* gentiles could be accepted as true worshipers without having to be part of the Mosaic covenant. It does not support any idea that people could be accepted as true worshipers without associating with God's people. This account shows that they had to be taught by and be associated with the Christian arrangement which now replaced the Mosaic. For those outside of contact with the Christian arrangement God continued to permit them to go their own way without His interference or judgement, until the good news reached them or the resurrection (Ac.17:30). God's provision for those without contact with his covenant people is the resurrection (Ac.24:15; Lk.23:43).

But, you ignore the Scriptural requirements for anyone to become a true worshiper as made clear in Scripture and this account. God gave His universal requirements to Noah as His channel of communication, and all his posterity would be acceptable as long as they were obedient to that mandate. But, according to Scripture, anyone who by design or ignorance departed from true worship was "permitted" to go their own way (Acts 14:16; 17:30; Rom.3:25; 9:22; 2Cor.5:19; Eph.4:18; Josh.24:2). The facts show that no one outside of God's covenant people held to the same standards as Noah did. So your "if" clause is pure speculation.

According to Scriptural teaching, the requirements enunciated to Noah for true worshipers were passed ONLY to Israel, they were the ONLY ones entrusted with God's communications and worship (Rom.3:2; 9:4; Ps.147:20; De.4:7,8; 29:29; 2Ki 5:15; Ac.10:45). Only through attachment with God's covenant people could others become acceptable worshipers "like Noah" (2Chron.6:32,33; Jn.4:22; Ru:1:15,16; Gen.22:18; Ex:19:6; Zec:8.23; Isa.45:14; 55:3,6,7; Ac.8.27). During the Mosaic arrangement Gentiles were left in "darkness," "ignorance" and "alienated" from true worship (Isa.42:7; 49:6; Lk.2:32; Ac.26:18; Rom.2:19; 11:30; Eph.2:11-12,19; 4:17-18; 1Pet.2:9,10).

Likewise, from 36 C.E. on, the ONLY way for “nations” to be blessed as acceptable to Jehovah would be through association with spiritual Israel--true Christians (1Cor.4:1; 2Co 5:18,19; Mat.28:19,20; Eph 2:19; 3:10; 1Pet.2:9; Ac.11:13-14; 13:46-48; 15:7; 26:18; Rom.1:5-6).

There is absolutely no record that God accepted anyone as worshipers outside of the Mosaic (or Christian) arrangement. This is a purely unscriptural, self-serving speculation on your part!

>[MS]: My consideration of our subject of blood and what God requires centers on whether there is sound Scriptural evidence to impose our view on pain of shunning. Since we teach a prohibition then I am looking for proof of a prohibition such as the one we teach.<

The requirement for all true Christian worshipers is to “abstain” and “keep themselves” from blood (Ac.15:20; 21:25). This alone is enough Scriptural evidence to show that any Christian who accepts a blood transfusion has removed himself from obedience to God and communion with true worshipers. He is not acceptable as a Christian worshiper. But we have more scriptural evidence. This Apostolic Decree was explicitly stated to be based on and explained by the Mosaic writings (Ac.15:21). These Scriptures clearly show that “abstaining from blood” meant that “no sort of blood” was to be eaten by faithful worshipers, but could only be poured out as sacred to Jehovah (Gen.4:8 Lev.17:10; De.12:23). This unity of Scripture is absolute Scriptural proof that taking blood into one’s body is a violation of God’s law for Christians.

On the other hand, you have presented no valid Scriptural evidence whatsoever which mitigates our Scriptural doctrine. Instead, you have consistently twisted, ignored, distracted from and misrepresented Scripture context in order to support your personal speculations and opinions.

>[MS]: Addressing and offering potential extensions of God’s STATED requirements as though they may provide some guiding principle that each one should consider would also be appropriate. On the other hand, imposing UNSTATED prohibitions with the same force as we would impose STATED prohibitions is going beyond what is WRITTEN.<

Concerning the use of blood, I have presented ONLY one unstated “guiding principle.” That is the use of fractions from the testimony of God’s creative works. Responding to this “extension,” we have done just as you state here: we do not impose a doctrinal stand on the propriety of using or obtaining fractions. Nor do we impose doctrine on modern scientific methods like testing of blood where there is no definite violation of blood’s sanctity or consumption thereof.

On the other hand, the Scriptural principles governing the prohibition against blood use are clearly and explicitly STATED, RESTATED and WRITTEN. I have proven that these principles in the scriptures made God’s requirements clear even when specific laws were not explicitly stated. According to God’s Word, these UNSTATED prohibitions based on STATED principles were binding on God’s servants. The penalty, stated by God Himself, for breaking the UNSTATED prohibitions demanded by these STATED principles was death. (Ge 4:8,9,14; 39:9; Ge 13:13; 18:20; 20:2-7; 38:24; 39:9; Rom.1:26,27; Jude 14,15; Mt.19:3-9; 1Jn.3:11,12) Our doctrine is strictly based on what is WRITTEN in Scripture. But, you must completely ignore these Scriptural facts and principles in order to maintain your position (1Cor.2:14-16).

“Not being guided by divine principles, he cannot judge matters correctly, cannot see the issues clearly, or evaluate the factors involved and arrive at right decisions. Pro.28:5” —it,2; 1139

>[MS]: And, please, don’t do on with complaints about me requiring specific “thou shall not” for every possible sin! You know perfectly well that is neither my position nor my inclination!<

To the contrary, it is obvious that this would be the ultimate result of your reasoning. We already have a total prohibition made clear by stated principles in the Noachian, Mosaic and Apostolic laws! You must try in every way to circumvent these clear mandates. Your deceptive logic demands that we must have an explicit and specific prohibition mentioning transfusions before you would admit it. You must ignore all sound logic, reason, scientific fact and medical descriptions in your assertion that IV transfusion is not really a violation of the explicit law against “eating.”

>[MS]: Regarding your summary points: You assert a failure to counter the following the numbered items. My comments follow each one:<

>>[RR]: 1.) That blood is equated with life and thus incontestably sacred. Life is in the blood *while in living animals.* It doesn't become sacred due to the animal being killed.<<

>[MS]: Life is sacred, but that does not mean we must have EXPRESS permission to use it from day to day as we see fit. We must only make sure to abide by what God prohibits us from using our life for and also make sure we use our life in ways he mandates. Otherwise we do not need his EXPRESS permission to use life for specific things from day to day as though otherwise we are somehow rebelling against some unwritten principle based on the sanctity of life.<

You have not answered to the point. You distract from *blood* to the dissimilar matter of just living our life which God has clearly given us relative authority over. You distract from the fact that God never gave any such prerogative regarding blood. You ignore the clearly STATED and WRITTEN principle in Scripture that blood is sacred as life and belongs ONLY to God. You ignore scriptures clearly showing that we cannot use blood without God's express permission. You fail to see that your very argument here would deny blood transfusion. God has "prohibited us from" eating blood. Whether you place a nutrient in your mouth or directly into your vein, it is still eating and thus a violation of God's law.

>>[RR]: 2.) While God gave animals into man's hand as food, He retained blood of living creatures as His alone. Again, indisputably sacred.<<

>[MS]: Though animals are living and though God has always held life sacred, there is no indication that God felt it ungodly that humans kill animals or use the body parts of animals. Abel killed animals without God's express permission, and God himself gave de facto permission to use animal parts by providing animal skin clothing to Adam and Eve. As for blood, a prohibition against eating blood cannot be extended to ANY use of blood anymore than either of us could logically assert that Adam and Eve would have acted sacrilegiously had they enjoyed shade provided from a Tree they were prohibited from EATING from.<

Again, you have not answered to the point. You distract from *blood* which was explicitly withheld from mankind to other body parts which God clearly gave mankind relative authority over. You distract with a Strawman: my argument was that blood was withheld from man's prerogative, NOT that the "prohibition against eating extends the prohibition" against other uses. You ignore *Scriptural* reasoning clearly showing that God's servants knew that the principle behind not "eating" from the tree meant you could not "touch" either. Instead, you again assert your own reasoning as fact.

Your failure to address these basic and clear teachings in the Noachian Mandate demonstrates that your whole argument is based on an ignoring of, and distraction from, Scriptural teachings and a reliance on your own personal supposition.

>>[RR]: 3.) The very same texts show that human blood was viewed by God as even more sacred.<<

>[MS]: More sacred? You should reconsider this before I comment. Certainly God expects obedience regardless of the object of His expressed will. The question is, what is God's will regarding donor blood for transfusion and whether we can prove that Scripturally. I am not trying to say one sacred thing is more or less sacred than any other. Either God prohibits donor blood for medical transfusion or he does not or we cannot prove either.<

Again, you have not answered to the point but simply distract with some convoluted and barely pertinent reasoning. The Scriptural facts concerning human blood are clear to see, and went unanswered by you.

I believe that Scripture shows that some things can be termed as more sacred than others. Some things were so sacred that they could not be used under any circumstances while others could be used in certain situations. This was often based on what they represented. I shouldn't have to do your thinking for you, but, one obvious

difference was that animal blood could be shed for mundane purposes while human blood could not, animal blood could be used in sacrifice while such human sacrifice was prohibited. I'm sure that with a little mental effort you can come up with some other obvious differences as well as other Scriptural examples of varying degrees of sanctity.

The point stands: The Scriptures explicitly place human blood as more sacred. And logical reasoning agrees; If we couldn't eat animal blood, we certainly cannot eat human blood. If animal blood was withheld from man's prerogative, human blood definitely couldn't be used without God's express approval.

>>[RR]: 4.) Scripture explicitly prohibits eating blood and contains no limitation to only blood from killed animals.<<

>[MS]: Deuteronomy 14:21 disputes this assertion.<

No, it does not. Deuteronomy 14:21 agrees with the principles in Gen. 9 and explicitly prohibits any worshipers of Jehovah from eating unkilld animals.

Deuteronomy 14:21 plainly shows that worshipers of Jehovah clearly understood that the Noachian prohibition did in fact include blood from animals not killed by humans. Yet, God did not enforce obedience on those who rebelled against His rule. This exception in the Mosaic Law meant nothing more than that God's people could make use of flesh when blood could not be removed. But, ONLY by selling it to *non-believers* already separated from God's communion. If God's people had understood the Noachian Mandate to apply only to butchered animals there would have been no need to provide this instruction.

There is absolutely no support for your position to be found in this Scripture when it comes to *worshipers of Jehovah* eating blood from any source.

>>[RR]: 5.) The law against eating animals which had died on their own demonstrates that it wasn't the killing which caused the prohibition.<<

>[MS]: But God provision of unbled animal carcasses as food does speak to how HE FELT about eating unslaughtered and unbled animals aside from the requirements of the Mosaic Law. This is precisely the question of the Noachian Law! That is, did it prohibit eating of unbled flesh of animals that died of themselves?<

You again distract from the point of fact. God here did make it VERY clear "how HE FELT about eating unslaughtered animals!!" He explicitly forbade his worshipers from eating it. Other Scriptures emphasize how JEHOVAH FELT by showing that eating unbled carcasses made the individual spiritually unclean (Lev.17:15; 22:8; Ezek.4:14; Ex.22:31). Only a dog or a non-believer would do such a thing!

The context was not between worshipers under the Noachian mandate and worshipers under the Mosaic Law. It was between true worshipers and unclean non-worshipers. Therefore, this exception within the Mosaic arrangement tells us nothing different regarding the extent of the Noachian mandate.

You are confusing your own personal interpretation with the Scriptural understanding. You are ignoring explicit statements from Scripture in order to force your own interpretation as to what this exception meant.

>>[RR]: 6.) Scripture shows that due to life being in the blood it could only be poured out.<<

>[MS]: The Noachian Law does not prescribe this whereas the Mosaic Law does. Applying it to the Noachian Law is no less than you interposing the Mosaic Law upon it as is the two are the same. IN effect you are saying, "Look, the two laws say the same thing because I say they do!" God had already given de facto permission to use animal parts. We have no reason to believe that until the Mosaic Law that God required ANYONE to adhere to any other standard.<

We do not have any explicit pre-Noachian prohibitions regarding the use of blood. However, based on pre-Noachian statements made by God and humans showing that blood was equated with "life," we can reasonably

conclude that God's view did not change. The explicit statements of the Noachian Mandate then serves to make it abundantly clear to mankind that blood was never given to humans but was reserved as God's only.

Similarly, it is not simply my personal opinion that the Noachian and Mosaic codes enunciated the same view. This is the view made clear in God's word: First, the principles behind both the Noachian and Mosaic prohibitions left no allowance for any use of blood. Second, every mention of blood in Scripture demonstrates that blood could not be put to personal use. And third, the Apostles obviously viewed the Noachian and Mosaic code as saying the same thing and explicitly extended their application as a united whole to Christians (Ac.15:21). You must completely ignore this fact in order to continue misinterpreting the extent of the Apostolic Decree's prohibition.

>>[RR]: 7.) The Apostolic decree continued the prohibition as stated in Moses' writings with the all-encompassing command to "abstain from blood" again with no limitation to only blood from dead animals.<<

>[MS]: The question is what establishes the meaning of the Apostolic Decree. Since this is the question then just asserting what provides the meaning is fallacious. Also, there is nothing all-encompassing about the Apostolic Decree. If we held ourselves to that standard then we would shun brothers who looked at, felt of, smelled of or thought about blood because each one is an antithesis of abstaining from blood.<

Your response here is a complete and utter illogical distraction from the facts. First, I did not assert my own opinion. In the paragraph you partially quote here, what I did "assert" was that THE SCRIPTURES provided and established the meaning of the Apostolic Decree. This is called evidence. You have not responded to the evidence but have simply tried to pass it off as my personal opinion. According to the *explicit statement* of the Apostles, the meaning and extent of the Apostolic prohibition is made clear by the laws and principles outlined in all of the Mosaic writings (Ac.15:21).

You then go beyond all reasoning on facts in your logic. What is it about the statements "abstain from" and "stay away from" blood that you don't think is all encompassing?? A claim that it's not all encompassing must demand a total ignorance of the fact that abstaining from blood was equated with abstaining from fornication and idolatry!

Finally, we do hold to the standards imposed by Scripture. We avoid blood just like we avoid fornication and idolatry. Christ showed that obedience to the *principles* behind God's laws require that true Christians guard their thinking as much as their actions (Mat.5:21ff). While the Scriptures demand that we shun those who make their improper thoughts known by actions, Christ also states that improper thinking is equally a violation against God's laws. This shows that individuals who mentally reject the Scriptural prohibition against blood are committing a sin equal to fornication and idolatry and will be held accountable by God. Even when this disrespect for blood's sacredness is hidden and only in their thinking (Ec.12:14; Mr.7:20-23; Lk.12:2,3; 1Cor.4:5).

>>[RR]: 8.) because the testimony of Scripture shows that humans understood that blood was sacred since they never used blood in any way which was not expressly approved by God.<<

>[MS]: This is your interpretation.<

Nice response. You might as well come back with the common "Oh Yeah?" when you don't have a pertinent response. I didn't give you my interpretation, I gave you the "testimony of Scripture" as evidence. It is an undeniable fact that in Scripture, without exception, every mention of blood use by humans was only that which was expressly approved by God. There is no scriptural record that any faithful human ever decided for himself how to use blood.

I think we have made a thorough examination of your position and the Scriptural view regarding God's view of blood. My opinion is that you have consistently refused to acknowledge the clearly stated principles governing the use of blood. You have ignored the context of scripture. You have ignored clear scriptural facts and revealed that your position relies on personal opinion and speculation.

I doubt that you have any further arguments that would not simply be answered by further repeating what has been presented.

Yours,

Ron Rhoades

From: Marvin Shilmer to Ron Rhoades

Date: Fri, 4 Apr 2003 23:18 EST

Dear Brother Rhoades,

In reading your voluminous reply (all 3 parts!) of March 29, 2003, I cannot help but remember the simple dilemma that sparked the entire thing. Over a year ago I stated:

“We are instructed to shun publishers who conscientiously accept a platelet agent for sake of their child’s well-being. Yet on the other hand we are instructed to respect publishers who conscientiously accept a similar or greater amount of a hemoglobin agent for sake of their child’s well-being, by continuing to view them as “in good standing.” I cannot explain this peculiarity because there is no scripture making such a distinction possible.”

I appreciate your replies trying to answer this dilemma. From your responses I see validity in the scenario above in that your replies evidence what I too have found, that no SCRIPTURAL distinction exists for why we should respect those who conscientiously accept medical transfusion of a hemoglobin agent yet simultaneously shun those that conscientiously accept medical transfusion of a platelet agent. If, on the other hand, you can find what you call “testimony of God’s creative works” where hemoglobin from blood is naturally transferred between circulatory systems then please do provide the evidence.

Otherwise your long oratory is so full of error, assumption and circular thought that it pretty well speaks for itself to the learned reader. For example,

You write:

“Further laws all speak of total abstinence from blood use for those who want to please God.”

And, you write:

“You just choose to ignore the clear Scriptural answer. God’s Law for Christians is the unequivocal: “Abstain from blood!” And “Keep from blood!” To make sure that Christians understood the EXTENT required, the Apostolic Decree explicitly referred to the Mosaic code as explaining its application (Ac.15:20, 21).”

First, you assert that God requires unequivocally that Christians must abstain totally from blood, yet the entirety of your replies to me represent an apologia for the doctrinal position of the Watchtower Society for Jehovah’s Witnesses, and that doctrinal position tells us to respect the fact that Jehovah’s Witnesses use from the donated and stored blood supply every day of the week! Using regularly from the donated and stored blood supply can hardly be deemed an unequivocal and total abstention from blood, yet that is what you say you are defending.

It is insightful to ask exactly what the Watchtower Society’s doctrinal position on blood would have us respect regarding an example gallon of blood. This doctrinal position requires us to respect using from donated blood as evidenced by teaching us to respect our brothers when they conscientiously accept all manner of parts from blood that have been dissected into a form other than white cells, red cells, platelets or plasma. Furthermore, this means that of our sample gallon of blood the Society’s doctrinal position requires us to respect the transfusion of the ENTIRE gallon as long as it is first dissected into doctrinally non-prohibited parts, first. So, what happens under this doctrinal position to our sample gallon of blood? The WHOLE gallon is transfused! You can use whatever language you want in whatever amount you want, but this is NOT pouring blood out on the ground, and it certainly is NOT abstaining from blood.

Secondly, you claim to be defending the teachings of the Watchtower Society yet above you assert something contrary to an explicit teaching of the Society when they say of the Apostolic Decree “So there was not an imposing on Gentile Christians of a responsibility to conform to the Mosaic Law or some portion of it but, rather, there was a confirming of standards recognized prior to Moses.” (United in Worship, page 149, 1983) A

statement that the Apostolic Decree explicitly referred to the Mosaic CODE as explaining its application is contrary to the Society's doctrinal position.

You write:

"The specific use addressed with Noah was the willful eating of blood to sustain life. I have seen no logical way to avoid the conclusion that transfusions are in fact "eating" and thus fall under every explicit scriptural statement prohibiting its use."

You may not agree, but taking blood or ANY part of blood into our digestive tract is eating blood, and this is wholly different from medical transfusion of blood or parts of blood. Digesting of blood or ANY part of blood is the body's way of reducing it into nutrients for the body. This is eating. Transfusion of blood or ANY part of blood does not digest blood to serve as a nutrient. Rather, transfusing results in blood working as blood, not as food.

Furthermore, a fact of nutrition you want to ignore is found in your favored example of transference from mother to unborn child. For a fact EVERY BIT of nutrition consumed by an unborn child comes from its mother's blood! How does this fact work under your supposed "testimony of God's creative works"? Given your contention of "testimony of God's creative works" it seems logic would indicate that gaining nutrition from blood is just fine. Or, does the "testimony of God's creative works" end when it interferes with your opinions/propositions? I suppose you have a mountain load of words for this one, too.

On the subject of blood and eating, here is a fact you want to ignore:

The Society's doctrinal position on blood draws a distinction between using hemoglobin and using platelets. We are to respect JWs using one and shun JWs using the other. However, BOTH serve as food if taken into our digestive tract. Therefore, according to your line of thought, both of these parts from blood should be treated the same, biblically. But that is not what the Society teaches, which means your apologia does not defend the Society's teaching but rather it tries to defend you own concoction.

Of Deuteronomy 14:21, you write:

"When God gave permission to sell unbled flesh for non-believers to eat there was no lessening of blood's sacredness. Similarly, when God gave permission for humans to shed a murderer's blood there was no lessening of blood's sacredness (Gen.9:5). These are just cases where the circumstances dictate an exception to sacred law. Jehovah showed consideration to his servants in allowing unclean meat to be put to use by selling it to those who had no clean standing with Jehovah nor moral compunction regarding blood. This tells us nothing different regarding Jehovah's view of blood as sacred."

Sorry, Ron, it is patently absurd to claim that Jehovah providing unbled animal carcasses that died of themselves expressly for food to Noah's descendents outside the special requirements of the Mosaic Law was a 'circumstance dictating an exception to sacred law.' There is nothing whatsoever about finding an animal dead of itself that dictates an exception to sacred law! The notion would be humorous if not for the seriousness of the subject. Israelites could just as easily been required to throw such dead bodies to the dogs just as those that were killed by being torn by wild beasts. (Ex. 22:31) But in the case of animals that died of themselves that's not what God required, is it. No, Jehovah provided that this unbled flesh could be provided to descendents of Noah OUTSIDE requirements of the Mosaic Law, expressly for FOOD. Guess what? Christians are OUTSIDE the requirements of the Mosaic Law, too. If you would imply that the Mosaic Law is still in force regarding blood then you are teaching a repudiation of faith in Jesus Christ. (See United in Worship book, page 148 par. 6-8, 1983)

Of interest is your treatment of Deuteronomy 14:21 in other instances. Like the Watchtower Society you speak of this text as though it portrays Jehovah allowing gentiles to do as they please in conflict with His sacred standards. You completely talk circles around the fact that this text portrays something far more than a simple allowance in that it portrays Jehovah actually PROVIDING unbled flesh expressly for purposes of eating it when He did not have to do so. According to your many assertions this would end up as an instance of Jehovah FACILITATING a great act of wickedness by helping gentiles break a law that He still held them accountable to! Readers can make of this what they will.

You write:

“The facts show that on one outside of Gods’ covenant people held to the same standards as Noah did.”

One word is enough to refute your statement above: Job.

Indeed! Job is an example of a man that feared god and worked righteousness according to what God expected of HIM, and he was acceptable to God. (Acts 10:35) The Bible depicts Noah as faultless. The Bible depicts Job as blameless. There were other men too, as depicted in the Bible, which were not part of any special covenanted people yet were apparently faithful to Jehovah. By the time of Israel whether there were other men and women who were living in parts of the earth way beyond possible knowledge of God’s laws through Moses yet were still living according to God’s decree to Noah is no more than idle speculation on your part. Indeed! There are no such “facts” to show as you assert. The statement of yours is not only error, it is self-serving presumptuous speculation.

Finally, there’s the subject of the principle you say exists in the Noachian decree that blood is sacred and therefore totally prohibited from our use. You can believe this principle exists as you say it does, if you want. Too, anyone else is free to believe this, if they want. However, no amount of words makes it true if it’s not there. The problem with your belief is that it reads a principle into the text of Genesis 9 and then uses THAT as evidence in support of a similar conclusion, which is circular. I could just as easily contend that the same account offers an unstated principle that life is sacred and should be protected at the cost of life and that this principle proves that using donor blood to same life by transfusion is required by Jehovah. But were I to assert such an unwritten principle it would be me reading my own conclusions into the text and then using THAT as evidence to my own end. On the other hand, should I assert this principle it would have as much force as does yours given that the Bible without a doubt underscores the value and sanctity of life just as it does blood, even to the point of us giving our own blood in behalf of another that he might live. (John 15:13)

There is no need to reply to the remainder of your voluminous use of words. Enough is said that educated readers caring to analyze the discussion can determine what is false and what is true, what is solid and what is not, and whether specific life and death doctrinal positions are biblically valid. The responsibility of each of us is to make sure that a teaching that can have the effect of removing the possibility of continued life is of God’s heart/thinking. The Bible offers condemnation for those teaching a doctrine leading to premature death that is not of God. (Jeremiah 7:31)

Lastly, do I have your permission to publicly share the correspondence between us? I believe quite a few would benefit from seeing how you try and answer for the Society’s doctrinal position on blood.

Your brother,

Marvin Shilmer

From: Marvin Shilmer to Ron Rhoades

Date: Wed, 16 Apr 2003 9:11 EST

Dear Brother Rhoades,

In the forwarded email (see below) I asked whether I have your permission to publicly share our private correspondence on the subject of blood because I believe quite a few would benefit from seeing how you try and answer for the Society's doctrinal position on blood. This was two weeks ago. Do I have your permission to share our discussion publicly or not?

Your brother,

Marvin Shilmer

[[Forwarded was the previous one dated Fri, 4 Apr 2003 23:18 EST. The forwarded portion is deleted in this text version to reduce clutter and avoid redundancy.]]

From: Ron Rhoades to Marvin Shilmer

Date: Thu, 17 Apr 2003 13:28 EST

Marvin,

I'm sorry, for some reason I never received your post of April fourth. As to sharing our correspondence with others, of course that is OK. I never considered our conversations to be private since it started in a public forum. Nothing in our correspondence has been different than what we have continuously shared publicly.

Ron

From: Ron Rhoades to Marvin Shilmer

Date: Tue, 13 May 2003 14:45 EST

Marvin,

>[You wrote]: In reading your voluminous reply (all 3 parts!) of March 29, 2003, I cannot help but remember the simple dilemma that sparked the entire thing.<

Do I detect a whine of complaint here? You have derided others when they refuse to respond in detail to your convoluted reasonings but you now want to complain when you receive an in-depth response to every possible argument you can devise (2Cor.10:4,5).

>[MS]: From your responses I see validity in the scenario above in that your replies evidence what I too have found, that no SCRIPTURAL distinction exists for why we should respect those who conscientiously accept medical transfusion of a hemoglobin agent yet simultaneously shun those that conscientiously accept medical transfusion of a [...similar or greater amount of a] platelet agent. If, on the other hand, you can find what you call “testimony of God’s creative works” where hemoglobin from blood is naturally transferred between circulatory systems then please do provide the evidence.<

Suffice it to say that your initial argument was completely and satisfactorily answered in a scriptural and logical manner. And every example you gave in defense of your position was shown to be irrelevant or illogical. Failure to see the evidence of a marked difference between accepting major blood components and fractions is not a logical or reasonable position. It is a problem of will—a predisposition which ignores or circumvents obvious facts. Our position is based on and in total agreement with Scripture, while yours has no sound Scriptural or logical basis. Your method has been simply to distract from and misrepresent the scriptures, the facts, and my arguments. That deceptive argumentation is what I will primarily address in this response. In fact there is virtually no argument presented by you in this post which is not a misrepresentation, a straw-man or an outright false argument.

Your final “conclusion” here is simply another device to distract from the applicable evidence. When provided with evidence, you can retreat to evermore minute specifics till you find one which could never be explicitly proven. This type of deceitful reasoning allows you to continue to deny receiving an adequate answer. If science discovers an example of natural transference of hemoglobin you will simply then retreat to the same demand but with a different fraction and then on to atoms. The fact is, that evidence of the transference of a couple of fractions is enough to reasonably demonstrate that all fractions must be excluded from our doctrinal prohibition. Your argument again boils down to an unreasonable demand for an explicit “thou shall not” in Scripture. It would be the same as someone telling Joseph that “no Scriptural law exists” which condemns fornication.

A good illustration to show the unreasonableness of your argument is if I rent property, but the contract prohibits the renter from using any “trees.” IMO, most individuals would reasonably apply this prohibition to any use of the major components like bark or leaves. Baring any further information it would also reasonably bar any use of minor tree parts as well. However, in showing the property, I demonstrate how to use mulch from decomposed tree leaves on the garden. This is an explicit approval for the use of *leaf* mulch. On one hand, through implication, it is logical to conclude that I would also approve of using mulch derived from decomposed *bark*. On the other hand, there is absolutely no valid reason to conclude that using the whole leaves or bark would be OK. This would be contrary to the explicit command and would have no logical support in the expressed permission (explicit or implicit) to use mulch derived from trees.

I don’t believe anyone could condemn the renter for his logical position of using both leaf and bark mulch and avoiding the use of bark and leaves. His conclusions would be solidly based on, and in agreement with, the written contract. It is also plain to see that the *amount* of mulch used has no relevancy to what is or is not prohibited or permitted. That is, just because the implicitly permitted *bark* mulch involves “a similar or greater amount” of the original tree than the prohibited leaves does not argue against applying the prohibition to the leaves.

Your argument is like condemning the renter for using mulch derived from bark because the landlord only

demonstrated using mulch from leaves. Then your argument jumps to the conclusion that there's no evidence that using the actual leaves is wrong, since it cannot be shown that the landlord explicitly demonstrated using mulch from bark. Clearly your argument is completely irrelevant, illogical and distractive.

So to test the reasonableness and logic of your demand for a specific evidence let's use your words with this example where emotion and predisposition does not play a part:

“no [contractual] distinction exists for why we should respect those who conscientiously use [bark mulch] yet simultaneously shun those that conscientiously [use the whole leaves]. If, on the other hand, you can find [testimony in the Landlord's demonstration] where [mulch from bark] is [used] then please do provide the evidence.”

It is easy to see that your argument fails on several levels. It first ignores the obvious and reasonable application of the explicit prohibition to the major parts. It secondly distracts from additional evidence, explicit and implicit, concerning the acceptability of derived fractions. If we consider all the facts it is easy to see an obvious and logical distinction between a major component (bark/platelets) and a derivative (mulch/fractions).

>[MS]: You write: >>[RR]: “Further laws all speak of total abstinence from blood use for those who want to please God.” “You just choose to ignore the clear Scriptural answer. God's Law for Christians is the unequivocal: “Abstain from blood!” And “Keep from blood!” To make sure that Christians understood the EXTENT required, the Apostolic Decree explicitly referred to the Mosaic code as explaining its application (Ac.15:20, 21).”<<

>[MS]: First, you assert that God requires unequivocally that Christians must abstain totally from blood, yet the entirety of your replies to me represent an apologia for the doctrinal position of the Watchtower Society for Jehovah's Witnesses, and that doctrinal position tells us to respect the fact that Jehovah's Witnesses use from the donated and stored blood supply every day of the week!<

As I said, you here misrepresent my arguments and rip them from their context in order to force some inconsistency into my position. You demanded a SCRIPTURAL statement. I gave you that and showed that it would completely destroy your position condoning use of blood while our DOCTRINE is based entirely on those scriptures. My position, and the WTS's, is that “evidence from God's creative works” demands an exclusion of blood fractions from the Scriptural prohibition. Because of this evident approval by Jehovah we must respect other's consciences in using fractions or not. There is no inconsistency in these two facets of our belief on blood since we are following God's revealed thinking.

>[MS]: This doctrinal position requires us to respect...the transfusion of the ENTIRE gallon as long as it is first dissected into doctrinally non-prohibited parts, first.<

Your, whole argument here is such an over simplification of the facts that it can only be termed a deceptive and an irrelevant misrepresentation of our doctrine. Major blood components are simply separated parts of blood. On the other hand, derivation of fractions is a complicated and extensive process and once separated they can not be simply recombined as blood again. At some point, between the original substance and constituent atoms, logic tells us we no longer have the original substance. You have nothing to support your view but your own opinions for where that happens while we have God's obviously expressed view in His allowance of fraction transference.

>[MS]: Secondly, you claim to be defending the teachings of the Watchtower Society yet above you assert something contrary to an explicit teaching of the Society when they say of the Apostolic Decree “So there was not an imposing on Gentile Christians of a responsibility to conform to the Mosaic Law or some portion of it but, rather, there was a confirming of standards recognized prior to Moses.” (United in Worship, page 149, 1983) A statement that the Apostolic Decree explicitly referred to the Mosaic CODE as explaining its application is contrary to the Society's doctrinal position....If you would imply that the Mosaic Law is still in force regarding blood then you are teaching a repudiation of faith in Jesus Christ.<

Neither I, the Society, the Apostles, nor Paul teach that the Mosaic Law is still in force. You are either misreading what I wrote or continuing your purposeful straw-man argumentation. Either way, you are misrepresenting what I said and falsely accusing me of teaching contrary to the Scriptures (and the WTS). And

you also misrepresent the Society's position as being contrary to the explicit statement of Scripture. Acts 15:20,21 clearly shows that the Apostles did in fact refer to Moses' writings, including the Mosaic Law, as explaining the prohibition on blood (Cf. 2Tim.3:16; Rom.3:20; 7:7; Gal.3:19). The Society continues to cite the Mosaic Law to explain the extent of the application of the prohibition on blood because that Law was explicitly based on the Noachian principles. The Bible writers constantly quoted from the Mosaic Law to show Christians what was required. What the apostles wrote and I said was that the Mosaic Law clearly explained the extent of the blood prohibition. The blood prohibition was in force before the Mosaic Law, continued under the Law and was continued for Christians. There is no conflict between what I presented and what the Society teaches as can be seen from a comparison of what I wrote in context and then a quote from the Watchtower:

"To make sure that Christians understood the EXTENT required, the Apostolic Decree explicitly referred to the Mosaic code as explaining its application (Ac.15:20,21). In turn, the Mosaic Law was based on the same exact principle found in the Noachian mandate." "Even though there are no explicitly stated pre-Mosaic laws against fornication and idolatry, is there really any doubt as to the extent of the commands against fornication and idolatry? No, because we can examine how the original principle was applied under the Mosaic Law. As Paul said, the Law made it clear what was a violation of God's standards. Likewise, the Mosaic Law makes it clear to all true worshipers that accepting a blood transfusion is a direct violation of not only the explicit law not to eat blood but also the underlying principles."

"Christians are not under the Mosaic Law. But they realize that the command not to eat blood predated the Law;...In addition, the Mosaic Law helps us to see the reason for God's insistence on the sanctity of blood. After forbidding the Israelites to consume blood of any kind, God said: "The soul of the flesh is in the blood, and I myself have put it upon the altar for you to make atonement for your souls, because it is the blood that makes atonement by the soul in it." (Leviticus 17:11)" --w95 1/15 p. 6

>[MS]: You write: >>[RR]: "The specific use addressed with Noah was the willful eating of blood to sustain life. I have seen no logical way to avoid the conclusion that transfusions are in fact "eating" and thus fall under every explicit scriptural statement prohibiting its use."<<

>[MS]: ...transfusing results in blood working as blood, not as food.

I have already responded to this self-serving argument showing that it can only be maintained by a delusive choice of facts. Blood consists of nutrients, like iron, and carries nutrients, all of which serve to sustain and build the body. Certainly blood in transfusions are acting like blood, and it is an inescapable fact that blood, "acting as blood," serves an essential part in supplying the body nutrients and in building tissue. With just a cursory search of dictionaries, encyclopedias and other references your argument here proves to be factually deceptive. Here are some wide ranging results from a simple search:

What is "food"? All living things "can be said to have two major nutritional requirements: (1) compounds which are sources of energy; and (2) substances whose primary purpose is to fill a structural or functional need." "All higher animals require a number of preformed complex organic compounds in their diet for bare survival." Foods contribute in essential nutrients for tissue repair and growth, for heat and energy and the normal functioning of the body. Nutrients are chemical substances or compounds which make specific contributions to some phase of the body economy. Nutrients are such things as ascorbic acid, calcium, iron, and proteins. --See Ency. Britannica

"Proteins are vital to any living organism. They are the important constituent of tissues and cells of our body. They form an important component of muscles and other tissues and vital body fluids like blood. Proteins in the form of enzymes and hormones are concerned with a wide range of vital metabolic processes in the body. They supply body building material and make good the loss that occurs due to wear and tear. As antibodies, they help in defending the body against infection. Thus they are vital to living process and carry out a wide range of functions essential for sustenance of life. --From: JayDoc Histoweb, Blood Page, BIOL 238 Class Notes - The Blood

"Aged and damaged red cells are disposed of in the spleen and liver by macrophages. The globin is digested and the amino acids released into the blood for protein manufacture" --From: JayDoc Histoweb, Blood Page, BIOL 238 Class Notes - The Blood

“In protein deficiency, blood proteins are broken down by the body to supply the essential amino acid needs of tissues more crucial to life.”

“Some iron is lost from the blood due to hemorrhage, menstruation, etc. and must be replaced from the diet...Apostransferrin is present in GI lining cells...It picks up iron from the GI tract...Once through the mucosal cell iron is carried in blood as transferrin to the liver and marrow. Iron leaves the transferrin molecule to bind to ferritin in these tissues.”

“When red cells are destroyed into spleen, hemoglobin is subdivided into amino acids and heme, that is catabolized to bilirubin. Bilirubin is then bound to albumin (indirect bilirubin) and transported, through the portal vein, to the liver, where bilirubin is conjugated to glucuronides (direct bilirubin) and excreted in bile. Bilirubin reaches intestine where is partially reabsorbed.” --Andrew Rinaldi MD, Description: Functions of the liver

>[MS]: Furthermore, a fact of nutrition you want to ignore is found in your favored example of transference from mother to unborn child. For a fact EVERY BIT of nutrition consumed by an unborn child comes from its mother's blood! How does this fact work under your supposed “testimony of God's creative works”? Given your contention of “testimony of God's creative works” it seems logic would indicate that gaining nutrition from blood is just fine.<

The only one ignoring facts here is you. This is another of your misrepresentations and irrelevant arguments. The very reason we limit our doctrine is because we know Jehovah allows fractions/nutrients to pass from mother to fetus! Do you really think your comments through? This, then, has absolutely no effect on my position, but, it destroys yours. Are you now admitting that blood does serve as food, since it provides nutrients to the body?

However, a fetus getting nutrition from its mother supplies no support for transfusion of blood or its major components. It only supports our position since 1) Jehovah approves of the transference of fractional material being passed between blood streams and 2) He allows blood from one entity to be processed, broken down and passed into another blood system. But, there is no transfer of blood between blood streams of the mother and fetus. The mother's blood carries nutrients which are processed through the placenta and then passed to the baby's own blood. But, then I really shouldn't have to point something as simple as that out to you. It seems your desperation to find some support is getting the best of any willingness to reason.

>[MS]: I suppose you have a mountain load of words for this one, too.<

Only enough to show the fallacy of your argument. More than would be necessary if you would read the information you already have a little more carefully. (As exemplified by your next argument.)

>[MS]: You write: >>[RR]: “The facts show that no one outside of Gods' covenant people held to the same standards as Noah did.”<<

>[MS]: One word is enough to refute your statement above: Job...The Bible depicts Noah as faultless. The Bible depicts Job as blameless. There were other men too, as depicted in the Bible, which were not part of any special covenanted people yet were apparently faithful to Jehovah.<

As usual for you, we have here another misleading, straw-man, irrelevant and misrepresenting argument. No wonder you can't get the truth out of the Scriptures since you can't seem to keep the context of what you read in mind from one sentence to the other. As can be seen even from your partial quote the context of my words was dealing with the time of God's covenant people under the Mosaic Code, not with faithful individuals like Job in the pre-covenant times. Indeed, immediately before your quote I had said:

“Certainly. Noah, all other patriarchs and their offspring who truly “feared God” and “worked righteousness” by obeying Jehovah's commands and living in accord with His righteous principles were acceptable worshipers. However, in this account, “for the first time” SINCE THE INCEPTION OF ISRAEL, Jehovah “took notice” of these descendants of Noah...” Then in response to your claim that ones in N. Amer. could not have “known MOSES OR ISRAEL” I said next:

“This Scripture does not say that DURING THE TIME OF THE MOSAIC ARRANGEMENT, descendants of

Noah could be acceptable as true worshipers without association with Israel...DURING THE MOSAIC ARRANGEMENT Gentiles were left in “darkness,” “ignorance” and “alienated” from true worship (Isa.42:7; 49:6; Lk.2:32; Ac.26:18; Rom.2:19; 11:30; Eph.2:11-12,19; 4:17-18; 1Pet.2:9,10).”

You are following the pattern of all who ignore Scriptural Truth when their arguments are revealed as fallacious and they cannot respond to the point. You resort to irrelevant accusations, and ripping the other person’s words as well as Scriptures out of context. Respond to the scriptural facts I presented and stop trying to distract from them.

>[MS]: By the time of Israel whether there were other men and women who were living in parts of the earth way beyond possible knowledge of God’s laws through Moses yet were still living according to God’s decree to Noah is no more than idle speculation on your part. Indeed! There are no such “facts” to show as you assert. The statement of yours is not only error, it is self-serving presumptuous speculation.<

Of course, this was YOUR speculation originally, not mine! While you have offered not even a smidgen of evidence in the vast historical record to support your speculation, I do not have to speculate since I have explicit and clear testimony from the Scriptures for my view.

In keeping with the aim of this response I will point out that you have again resorted to a blatant distractive argument here. You have completely avoided responding to what I presented. You present your own personal assertions as if they were facts to distract from the insurmountable scriptural facts I presented. To prove my view concerning God’s view of Gentiles living outside the Mosaic and Christian arrangement I cited more than 50 different Scriptures! You failed to respond to any of them. And you really expect others to believe your claim that “there are no such facts” to support my statement?? Amazing! If my view is “idle speculation” what does that make your’s?!!

What is fallacious presumption is to say this clear Scriptural teaching is “error and speculation.”

>[MS]: Finally, there’s the subject of the principle you say exists in the Noachian decree that blood is sacred and therefore totally prohibited from our use. You can believe this principle exists as you say it does, if you want...However, no amount of words makes it true if it’s not there...But were I to assert such an unwritten principle it would be me reading my own conclusions into the text<

Again, you just distract from the fact that the principle I refer to is WRITTEN. It is also explicitly confirmed as a principle which prohibits blood from our use in both Deuteronomy and Leviticus. When you previously tried to misconstrue Lev.17:11 I stated:

“Notice in Hebrew the conjunction KIY which is translated “for” and “because” in the NWT (Lev.17:11,14 [4x’s]; Deut.12:23 [1x]). KIY is used to introduce the causal sentence or to explicate the basis for a statement (See BDB Lexicon, TWOT Strong’s and Keil/Delitzsch). Therefore, these are explicit statements showing the *reason,* the *basis* for *why* blood was used on the altar and poured out....These verses four times state that they are not to eat or use blood BECAUSE life is in the blood—and God has placed blood on the alter to atone for their souls BECAUSE life is in the blood (Cf. De.12:23). We have one and only one basis for not using blood...It is exactly the same basis given to Noah for the prohibition against eating blood!!”

To deny that this Scriptural principle exists is beyond all reason.

>[MS]: Bible without a doubt underscores the value and sanctity of life just as it does blood, even to the point of us giving our own blood in behalf of another that he might live. (John 15:13)<

I will leave this last perversion of Scripture without comment since anyone can see what a mis-quote, misinterpretation, and misapplication it is. It just stands as a good example of what you have to resort to in order to support your rejection of Truth.

There is no need to reply to the remainder of your distractive arguments, deceptive use of and misinterpretations of Scripture. Enough is said that educated readers caring to analyze the discussion can determine what is false

and what is true, what is solid and what is not, and whether specific life and death doctrinal positions are biblically valid.

>[MS]: Your brother,

Pro. 6:16-19; Gal. 2:4-5.

Yours,

Ron Rhoades

From: Marvin Shilmer to Ron Rhoades

Date: Tue, 13 May 2003 15:46 EST

Hello, Brother Rhoades

Thanks for your last response. I have two final questions for which I am seeking straightforward answers.

1. Do you agree that the Society's currently doctrinal position tells us to respect the fact that Jehovah's Witnesses use from the donated and stored blood supply every day of the week?
2. Since I believe Jehovah's Witnesses and many others would benefit from seeing how you respond for the Watchtower Society's doctrinal position on blood, do I have your permission to share our entire discussion publicly, including this last installment from you and whatever answer to this letter you choose to make?

Marvin Shilmer

From: Marvin Shilmer to Ron Rhoades

Date: Tue, 13 May 2003 17:02 EST

[[Redundancy snipped]]⁸

In Addition:

Brother Rhoades,

My apologies for neglecting to ask a third question having to do with your illustration of a rental contract prohibiting the renter from using any trees. I would appreciate your answer and permission to share it with the rest of our discussion.

3. In your opinion, would the tenant be in violation of such an agreement if they intentionally removed a portion of one of the trees (in effect, a limb) and dissected it into parts like water and carbohydrates before they used it or them?

Marvin Shilmer

⁸ This email was sent as an addendum to the previous one. The original email contained the text of the previous email dated Tue, 13 May 2003 15:46 EST plus the additional part shown above in the main text. The redundant text was removed to keep clutter to a minimum.

From: Ron Rhoades to Marvin Shilmer

Date: Tue, 13 May 2003 17:35 EST

Marvin,

>[MS]: Thanks for your last response. I have two final questions for which I am seeking straightforward answers.<

I think I have already repeatedly given you straightforward answers to your questions. For there to be any further beneficial discussion you must address the evidence and Scripture facts I have presented, which you have largely ignored or distracted from. I would also like your response to where I pointed out that you misinterpreted my arguments and similar distractions.

>[MS]: 1. Do you agree that the Society's currently doctrinal position tells us to respect the fact that Jehovah's Witnesses use from the donated and stored blood supply every day of the week?<

I will respond to this question by a question for yourself. If anyone answers my question they will then have a direct answer showing how any Christian should view someone who accepts fractions derived from blood.

So, let me ask you. Has Jehovah demonstrated by his creative works that it is permissible for His worshipers to use fractions derived directly from blood?

As for your second question concerning sharing our discussion, we must be losing e-mails along the way. I had already sent you an OK, but following is a copy of what I wrote:

>>>>>>>

Marvin,

I'm sorry, for some reason I never received your post of April fourth. As to sharing our correspondence with others, of course that is OK. I never considered our conversations to be private since it started in a public forum. Nothing in our correspondence has been different than what we have continuously shared publicly.

>>>>>>>

Yours,

Ron

From: Marvin Shilmer to Ron Rhoades

Date: Tue, 13 May 2003 20:02 EST

Hello, Brother Rhoades

I have not avoided responding to what you call your arguments; I have simply not seen the need because I believe what you have written speaks for itself. Naturally, this assumes you are willing and happy to let your own words speak for themselves without response from me. As to the scriptural parts of our discussion, the amount of scriptures is of little consequence in comparison with the treatment we give the scriptures we do use. I feel like I have used scriptures objectively and soundly and I feel you have avoided important aspects of scripture. Whether I am right or wrong is for others to decide, which is as it should be. That I have not responded to some of your scriptural assertions is because I feel what you contend they mean is plain enough so I understand what you want them to mean. Where I felt it was needed I did address your views on important scriptures and you either offered clarification that spoke for itself or else avoidance that spoke for itself. Furthermore, since I am not the one teaching or enforcing a prohibition of using donor blood for transfusions I'm not sure what I have to answer for other than my ultimate answering to our Creator, which we both must do. My inquiry to you was to see what scriptural defense you could offer on the Society's blood policy, and I take what you have said as your defense.

I asked three questions in my last letter and was hoping for straightforward answers. Regarding my first question asked, you wrote:

“I will respond to this question by a question for yourself. If anyone answers my question they will then have a direct answer showing how any Christian should view someone who accepts fractions derived from blood.”

Your question asked is:

“Has Jehovah demonstrated by his creative works that it is permissible for His worshippers to use fractions derived directly from blood?”

I cannot prove that what we see in creative works (presumably you mean your preferred instances between humans and not every instance between humans where transfers take place between two circulatory systems, and not the greater creative works where blood is eaten all the time, including human blood) demonstrates God's permission for worshippers to use fractions because “fractions” as we use the term is an entirely manmade designation and I see no distinction in scripture of one part of blood from another as though there is something God views as a “fraction” that is somehow less significant than another part going by some other label. At best one might be able to conclude that what we see in creation (your preferred example of human to human transfer, that is) shows specific parts of blood that God has designated for human transference, but we have no evidence suggesting that parts like hemoglobin are naturally transferred and we are taught to respect fellow believers that conscientiously accept hemoglobin solutions. In my opinion when you argue that SOME “fractions” are naturally allowed so therefore ALL of what we label as “fractions” we should respect the use of is a fallacious equivocation. It equivocates, for example, the part of blood we call hemoglobin with, for instance, the part we call albumin when there is absolutely no evidence suggesting that God views the two similarly as parts of blood, scripturally or otherwise (but most importantly scripturally). Your argument about “fractions” depends on how men have labeled parts of blood and men do not make their designations based on God's moral standards. Frankly, using the term “fraction” is pretty meaningless anyway considering the fact that scientist view any part of a whole as a fraction! In our teachings we have simply borrowed a term and applied it so that what WE term as “fraction” is acceptable. Whether this is indeed an instance of fallacious equivocation is for intelligent and educated readers to determine for themselves, and I am quite content to let them make that determination.

So, in a nutshell, my answer to your question is, no, because I cannot prove that Jehovah has demonstrated permissibility of all the parts of blood that we are taught to respect the use of and that is the important aspect; whether we can prove our teaching true to the extent and detail that we enforce it.

At this point I have only the three questions already asked that it would be nice to have your straightforward

answers to. You can choose not to answer if you wish, that is up to you. But I would appreciate your answers for sake of clarification. On the other hand, if you choose not to answer I would appreciate being told that so I am not left waiting for nothing.

Again, my questions are:

1. Do you agree that the Society's currently doctrinal position tells us to respect the fact that Jehovah's Witnesses use from the donated and stored blood supply every day of the week?
2. Since I believe Jehovah's Witnesses and many others would benefit from seeing how you respond for the Watchtower Society's doctrinal position on blood, do I have your permission to share our entire discussion publicly, including this last installment from you and whatever answer to this letter you choose to make?
3. Regarding your illustration of a rental contract prohibiting the renter from using any trees, in your opinion, would the tenant be in violation of such an agreement if they intentionally removed a portion of one of the trees (in effect, a limb) and dissected it into parts like water and carbohydrates before they used it or them?

To be fair, if there is some view you feel like I am asserting that you feel needs evidencing then I am more than happy to oblige. But, as I said before, my primary goal was to seek input from one reputed to be knowledgeable in the field and without a doubt I got your input. Nevertheless, if you spell out questions of my views that you want me to respond to I am more than happy to return the favor. As far as I'm concerned the more discussion among brothers of important subjects like this the better, and there is nothing about my views that I would want to avoid discussing. In fact, just the opposite is the case for me because communication is key to learning, and I enjoy learning.

Marvin Shilmer

From: Marvin Shilmer to Ron Rhoades

Date: Sat, 17 May 2003 20:14 EST

Brother Rhoades,

Well, are you going to provide straightforward answers to the questions or not?

Marvin Shilmer

[[Forwarded as part of this email was the previous one dated Tue, 13 May 2003 20:02 EST. The forwarded portion is deleted in this text version to reduce clutter and avoid redundancy.]]

From: Marvin Shilmer to Ron Rhoades

Date: Wed, 21 May 2003 12:52 EST

Dear Brother Rhoades,

It is now one week since requesting straightforward answers from you to three important questions, one of which requested your permission to share our discussion publicly and which you have already replied to for the most part. The two remaining questions are (as they were numbered previously):

1. Do you agree that the Society's current doctrinal position tells us to respect the fact that Jehovah's Witnesses use from the donated and stored blood supply every day of the week?

3. Regarding your illustration of a rental contract prohibiting the renter from using any trees, in your opinion, would the tenant be in violation of such an agreement if they intentionally removed a portion of one of the trees (in effect, a limb) and dissected it into parts like water and carbohydrates before they used it or them?

As I said before, it is up to you whether to provide straightforward answers to these questions or not, naturally. However, for the benefit of readers who will consider our discussion I believe it would be good that you do provide concise and frank answers to the questions so if there is something beyond what readers feel are obvious answers you will have an opportunity to help them see it otherwise in short order and in clear terms. It is not my intention to have the final say in our dialogue, and as things stand right now that is the case.

I will be sharing this information publicly within a few days. I will wait until Friday May 30, 2003 to receive your answers. As of Friday the 30th, unless I have heard from you, I will consider our discussion closed.

Marvin Shilmer

[[Forwarded as part of this email were the previous ones dated Sat, 17 May 2003 20:14 EST and Tue, 13 May 2003 20:02 EST. The forwarded portion is deleted in this text version to reduce clutter and avoid redundancy.]]

From: Marvin Shilmer to Ron Rhoades and Hal Goodnight⁹

Date: Thu, 29 May 2003 10:38 EST

Dear Brother Rhoades

As a reminder, unless I hear from you beforehand, tomorrow Friday May 30, 2003 I will consider our discussion closed and release it in its entirety for persons interested enough to read through it.¹⁰

Marvin Shilmer

[[Forwarded as part of this email were the previous ones dated Sat, 17 May 2003 20:14 EST, Tue, 13 May 2003 20:02 EST and Wed, 21 May 2003 12:52 EST. The forwarded portion is deleted in this text version to reduce clutter and avoid redundancy.]]

⁹ Prior to any bilateral agreement to make public this private email exchange Hal Goodnight is an individual whom Ron Rhoades had given all or parts of these exchanges. Hal Goodnight took it upon himself to publish an incomplete version of this material without benefit of at least a prior consult with this writer, Marvin Shilmer. As far as this writer knows Ron Rhoades made no effort to correct this act, and contrary to his email of Thu, 17 Apr 2003 13:28 EST our conversation did not start in a public forum. Despite futile attempts to have Hal Goodnight either publish the entire discussion as of that time or else publish none of it, Marvin Shilmer copied Mr. Goodnight with this email to Ron Rhoades in order to serve notice that the discussion was nearing an end and it would be made available in the near future in its entirety. Whether Hal Goodnight ever publishes a complete version of this exchange only time will tell. This footnote is to make readers aware of the fact that an incomplete version is in circulation as of this writing and who the responsible parties are. As of May 30, 2003 the incomplete version of this discussion is published online at:
<http://www.geocities.com/rogueactivex/RonRhoadesvrsMShilmer.htm>.

¹⁰ As of this writing of May 30, 2003 there were no additional emails received from Ron Rhoades attempting to further the discussion with Marvin Shilmer on the overall subject of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society's doctrinal position on blood or to communicate answers to the questions posed near the end of their discussion (see emails dated: Tue, 13 May 2003 15:46 EST and Tue, 13 May 2003 17:02 EST).