

**Bible Devotions: Lock Stock & Barrel**  
**Devotional Reading for Outdoorsmen**  
**(Old Testament)**

Leviticus 17:13

Blood Rite

*Whatever man of the children of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell among you, who hunts and catches any animal or bird that may be eaten, he shall pour out its blood and cover it with dust.*

Many of us know the traditional way a hunter is initiated after killing his first game animal. This usually takes the form of a blood rite, that is, the ceremonial smearing of the animal's blood on the face of the hunter. Though not as common, some hunters are urged to drink, or at least to taste, the animal's blood.

A more common practice I'm aware of is cutting the animal's throat after it has been killed, big game in particular. This is usually an unnecessary action, especially on a dead animal having zero blood pressure. Still, having slaughtered a few large farm animals in my time, some blood can be drained by slicing the throat of an animal immediately after it has been dealt a death blow.\*

The command to *pour out its blood and cover it with dust* served as a reminder of the life-giving nature of blood (Leviticus 17:14). The action was required of all Old Testament hunters and trappers before the animal could be eaten. We can only guess that the hunter cut the animal's throat in an attempt to keep the command. Regardless of how it was done, the Israelite, or resident foreigner, had this blood rite to perform while the carcass was still warm and the blood flowed freely.

The blood rite first appeared in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve disobeyed God. There they stood, naked before the Creator of the universe, sins exposed. God skinned animals so the disobedient man and woman could be covered with skins. I suppose there was a fair amount of bleeding when that happened, a blood rite only God could carry out because man could not.

Then there were hundreds of years of animal sacrifices performed by patriarchs and priests. Countless numbers of creatures were put to death. The blood rite was required by God as an atonement for sin and it had to be carried out exactly as He commanded, or else (Leviticus 10:1-2).

The blood rite was finally perfected on the cross of Christ. There, Jesus died to pay for the sins of the world. There was no sudden death upon that tree, just agonizing exsanguination as the Savior experienced a systematic execution. It was a blood rite only God could carry out because man could not.

We can't ignore the message of the blood rite. After all, we're talking about ending the life of a living creature for our pleasure or profit. I admit that killing an animal is gruesome in all its forms yet it is rather pretty when we compare it to the reproachable death of Jesus.

We must bear this reproach if we are to know Him as Lord (Hebrews 13:12-13). It's a blood rite that must be experienced if one is to be a blood-brother of the Son of God. Blood applied not just to one's face but to the entire life of a repentant sinner. Real blood that is red and warm, sticky and serous. Blood that once flowed through the veins of Jesus at 98.6 °F.

The blood of Jesus is unique blood, having man's physical properties and the Holy Spirit's supernatural power. It cannot be confined to days or dimensions. It transcends time and space at the same time and for all time. It defies all that could ever be known about hematology. It washes clean the dirtiest and filthiest sins man could ever invent. It doesn't spoil, ever. That's the miracle of its life-giving essence.

Somewhere, somehow, the blood of Jesus washed me clean when I confessed my sins to Him. Then it cleaned someone else, then someone else, with plenty to go around. That's the beauty of the Savior's blood. That's the truth of His blood rite.

\* We must take into consideration two things. First, a game animal is usually killed with a shot to a vital organ or blood vessel in the body cavity (a famous bow hunter claims that the second best shot on a deer is in the center of its 'ham,' severing the femoral artery, although I think it's a little risky). The killing shot obviously causes profuse hemorrhaging and expedites exsanguination, that is, the bleeding out process. A lot of blood pools internally and then drains as the animal is field dressed. Second, farm animals are usually shot in the brain. I've killed hogs this way and have seen a profuse amount of bleeding come from cutting their throats immediately after the trigger was pulled. In reality, throats were cut as the animals died, thus promoting bleeding. I know it sounds grisly, but this is what we must accept when we decide to kill an animal.

## Bible Devotions: Hook Line & Sinker (study guide)

Leviticus 17:13

Blood Rite

### HOOK

1. How do you like your steak cooked? Why?  
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2. Tell how you deal with blood after you kill an animal. If you don't hunt, what would you do?  
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3. Describe any rites of passage you do, or have witnessed, for a hunter who kills his first animal.  
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### LINE

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What is your view on the blood of Jesus? How real is it? How have you applied it to your life?

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How does your blood give you life? How does the blood of Jesus give eternal life? Discuss both in terms of nourishing, cleansing, purging – all the things that blood does for life.

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### SINKER

Take a few minutes to write your thoughts on this devotional. Reflect on your own experiences.

Key words:    blood                    confessing sin                    Jesus

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