

Ancient Sources for Acts

Chapter 15

Jubilees 22:16

And do thou, my son Jacob, remember my words,

And observe the commandments of Abraham, thy father:

Separate thyself from the nations,

And eat not with them:

And do not according to their works,

And become not their associate;

For their works are unclean,

And all their ways are a pollution and an abomination and uncleanness.

Tobit 1:10–11

¹⁰Now when I was carried away captive to Nineveh, all my brethren and my relatives ate the food of the Gentiles; ¹¹but I kept myself from eating it.

Letter of Aristeas 139–43

139 Now our Lawgiver being a wise man and specially endowed by God to understand all things, took a comprehensive view of each particular detail, and fenced us round with impregnable ramparts and walls of iron, that we might not mingle at all with any of the other nations, but remain pure in body and soul, free from all vain imaginations, worshipping the one Almighty God above the whole creation. 140 Hence the leading Egyptian priests having looked carefully into many matters, and being cognizant with (our) affairs, call us “men of God”. This is a title which does not belong to the rest of mankind but only to those who worship the true God. The rest are men not of God but of meats and drinks and clothing. For their whole disposition leads them to find solace in these things. 141 Among our people such things are reckoned of no account, but throughout their whole life their main consideration is the sovereignty of God. 142 Therefore lest we should be corrupted by any abomination, or our lives be perverted by evil communications, he hedged us round on all sides by rules of purity, affecting alike what we eat, or drink, or touch, or hear, or see. 143 For though, speaking generally, all things are alike in their natural constitution, since they are all governed by one and the same power, yet there is a deep reason in each individual case why we abstain from the use of certain things and enjoy the common use of others. For the sake of illustration I will run over one or two points and explain them to you.

Acts 15:1–5

Philo, Migration of Abraham 89–94

(89) For there are some men, who, looking upon written laws as symbols of things appreciable by the intellect, have studied some things with superfluous accuracy, and have treated others with neglectful indifference; whom I should blame for their levity; for they ought to attend to both classes of things, applying themselves both to an accurate investigation of invisible things, and also to an irreproachable observance of those laws which are notorious. (90) But now men living solitarily by themselves as if they were in a desert, or else as if they were mere souls unconnected with the body, and as if they had no knowledge of any city, or village, or house, or in short of any company of men whatever, overlook what appears to the many to be true, and seek for plain naked truth by itself, whom the sacred scripture teaches not to neglect a good reputation, and not to break through any established customs which divine men of greater wisdom than any in our time have enacted or established. (91) For although the seventh day is a lesson to teach us the power which exists in the uncreated God, and also that the creature is entitled to rest from his labors, it does not follow that on that account we may abrogate the laws which are established respecting it, so as to light a fire, or till land, or carry burdens, or bring accusations, or conduct suits at law, or demand a restoration of a deposit, or exact the repayment of a debt, or do any other of the things which are usually permitted at times which are not days of festival. (92) Nor does it follow, because the feast is the symbol of the joy of the soul and of its gratitude towards God, that we are to repudiate the assemblies ordained at the periodical seasons of the year; nor because the rite of circumcision is an emblem of the excision of pleasures and of all the passions, and of the destruction of that impious opinion, according to which the mind has imagined itself to be by itself competent to produce offspring, does it follow that we are to annul the law which has been enacted about circumcision. Since we shall neglect the laws about the due observance of the ceremonies in the temple, and numbers of others too, if we exclude all figurative interpretation and attend only to those things which are expressly ordained in plain words.

(93) But it is right to think that this class of things resembles the body, and the other class the soul; therefore, just as we take care of the body because it is the abode of the soul, so also must we take care of the laws that are enacted in plain terms: for while they are regarded, those other things also will be more clearly understood, of which these laws are the symbols, and in the same way one will escape blame and accusation from men in general. (94) Do you not see that Abraham also says, that both small and great blessings fell to the share of the wise man, and he calls the great things, “all that he had,” and his possessions, which it is allowed to the legitimate son alone to receive as his inheritance; but the small things he calls gifts, of which the illegitimate children and those born of concubines, are also accounted worthy. The one, therefore, resemble those laws which are natural, and the other those which derive their origin from human enactment.

Acts 15:6–12

y. Qidd 1.8 [61d]

[Z] [61d] Since they accepted responsibility for matters for which they were not liable, even as to matters for which they were liable, the Omnipresent credited it to them as if they had accepted the obligation on their own initiative.

[AA] How does R. Yosé b. R. Haninah interpret the verse, “Because of all this we make a firm covenant and write it” (Neh. 10:1)?

[BB] Since they accepted their responsibilities in a willing spirit, the Omnipresent credited it to them as if they had accepted the obligation to separate tithes on their own initiative.

b. Ros Has. 16b

Four things cancel the doom of a man, namely, charity, supplication, change of name and change of conduct.

b. Ros Has. 17a

Beth Hillel, however, says: He that abounds in grace inclines [the scales] toward grace, and of them David said, *I love that the Lord should bear my voice and my supplication*, and on their behalf David composed the whole of the passage, *I was brought low and he saved me*.

Acts 15:13–18

Chrysostom, Homily on Acts 33.1

THIS (James) was bishop, as they say, and therefore he speaks last, and herein is fulfilled that saying, “In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.” (Deut. xvii. 6; Matt. xviii. 16.) But observe the discretion shown by him also, in making his argument good from the prophets, both new and old.¹ For he had no acts of his own to declare, as Peter had and Paul. And indeed it is wisely ordered that this (the active) part is assigned to those, as not intended. to be locally fixed in Jerusalem, whereas (James) here, who performs the part of teacher, is no way responsible for what has been done, while however he is not divided from them in opinion.² (b) “Men and brethren,” he says, “hearken unto me.” Great is the moderation of the man. His also is a more complete oration, as indeed it puts the completion to the matter under discussion. (a) “Symeon,” he says, “declared:” (namely,) in Luke, in that he prophesied, “Which Thou hast prepared before the face of all nations, a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel.”³ (c) “How God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His Name.” (Luke ii. 25.)

Josephus, Jewish Wars 4.3.9 §159

And indeed they were Gorian the son of Josephus, and Symeon the son of Gamaliel, who encouraged them, by going up and down when they were assembled together in crowds, and as they saw them alone, to bear no longer, but to inflict punishment upon these pests and plagues of their freedom, and to purge the temple of these bloody polluters of it.

b. Sanh. 96b–97a

In that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David ha-nofeleth [that is fallen]. He replied, “Thus hat R. Johanan said: In the generation when the son of David [i.e. Messiah] will come, scholars will be few in number, and as for the rest, their eyes will fail through sorrow and grief.

Midr. Psa 76 §3 (171b):

Gen. Rab. 88.5.2f–3a

2 F. R. Joshua b. Levi said, “They correspond to the four cups of fury that the Holy One, blessed be he, will give the nations of the world to drink: ‘For thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, to me. “Take this cup of the wine of fury”’ (Jer. 25:15). ‘Babylon had been a golden cup in the Lord’s hand’ (Jer. 51:7). ‘For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup’ (Ps. 75:9). ‘And burning wind shall be the portion of their cup’ (Ps. 11:6).

G. “And in response to these, the Holy One, blessed be he, will give Israel four cups of salvation to drink in the age to come: ‘O Lord, the portion of my inheritance and of my cup, you maintain my lot’ (Ps. 16:5). ‘you prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies, you have anointed my head with oil, my cup runs over’ (Ps. 23:5). ‘I will lift up the cup of salvations and call upon the name of the Lord’ (Ps. 116:13).

H. What is said is not ‘cup of salvation’ but ‘cup of salvations,’ one in the days of the Messiah, the other in the time of Gog and Magog.”

3 A. Joseph said to him, “[Since the dream refers to Israel’s coming redemption,] you have brought me a good gospel, so I shall now give you a good gospel: “within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your office.””

CD 7:15–17

I will exile the tabernacle of your king and the bases of your statues from my tent to Damascus (Amos v, 26–7). The books of the Law are the tabernacle of the king; as God said, I will raise up the tabernacle of David which is fallen (Amos ix, 11). The king is the congregation; and the bases of the statues are the Books of the Prophets who saying Israel despised.

4Q174 1.10–13 (See Acts 13:13–15)

11QT 29.9–10

I will cause my glory to rest on it until the day of creation on which I shall create my sanctuary, establishing it for myself for all time according to the covenant which I have made with Jacob at Bethel.

1 Enoch 90.29

And I saw till the Lord of the sheep brought a new house greater and loftier than that first, and set it up in the place of the first which had been folded up: all its pillars were new, and its ornaments were new and larger than those of the first, the old one which He had taken away, and all the sheep were within it.

Jubilees 1.15–17

¹⁵And after this they will turn to Me from amongst the Gentiles with all their heart and with all their soul and with all their strength, and I will gather them from amongst all the Gentiles, and they will seek me, so that I shall be found of them, when they seek me with all their heart and with all their soul. ¹⁶And I will disclose to them abounding peace with righteousness, and I will remove them the plant of uprightness, with all My heart and with all My soul, and they shall be for a blessing and not for a curse, and they shall be the head and not the tail. ¹⁷And I will build My sanctuary in their midst,

and I will dwell with them, and I will be their God and they shall be My people in truth and righteousness.

Tg. Jonathan on Amos 9:11

At that *time*, I will set up again the *kingdom of the house* of David that has fallen; I will *rebuild their cities* I and set up their *congregations* anew. *It shall rule over all the kingdoms and it shall destroy and make an end of the greatness of armies; but it shall be rebuilt and reestablished* as in the days of old.

4Q174 1:12 (See Acts 13:13–15)

CD 7:16 (See Above)

4Q174 3:12 (See Acts 13:13–15)

CD 7:16 (See Above)

Acts 15:19–21

Gen. Rab. 34.13.1

A. “Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you, and as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything. Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood” (Gen. 9:3–4):

B. R. Yose b. R. Abin in the name of R. Yohanan: “The first man, who was not permitted to eat meat was a matter of mere appetite [and was permitted to eat only vegetables] was not admonished concerning not removing a limb from a living beast.

C. But the children of Noah, who were permitted to eat meat as a matter of appetite, were admonished about not eating a limb cut from a living beast. [They were likely to want to cut a limb off a beast in order to eat the meat. They did not have to avoid all meat other than they wished. So the admonition was necessary.]”

t. Abod. Zar. 8.4

A. Concerning seven religious requirements were the children of Noah admonished:

B. setting up courts of justice, idolatry, blasphemy [cursing the Name of God], fornication, bloodshed, and thievery.

C. *Concerning setting up courts of justice* – how so?

D. Just as Israelites are commanded to call into session in their towns courts of justice.

E. *Concerning idolatry and blasphemy* – how so?

F. *Concerning fornication* – how so?

G. “On account of any form of prohibited sexual relationship on account of which an Israelite court inflicts the death-penalty, the children of Noah are subject to warning,” words of R. Meir.

H. And sages say, “There are many prohibited relationships on which an Israelite court does not inflict the death penalty and the children of Noah are [not] warned. In regard to these forbidden relationships the nations are judged in accord with the laws governing the nations.

I. “And you have only prohibitions of sexual relations with a betrothed maiden alone.”

b. Sanh. 74a

By a majority vote, it was resolved in the upper chambers of the house of Nithza in Lydda that in every [other] law of the Torah if a man is commanded: “Transgress and suffer not death’ he may transgress and not suffer death, excepting idolatry, incest, [which includes adultery] and murder. Now may not idolatry be practiced [in these circumstances]? Has it not been taught: R. Ishmael said: Whence do we know that if a man was bidden, ‘Engage in idolatry and save your life’, that he should do so, and not be slain? From the verse, [*Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments; which if a man do,] he shall live in them:* but not *die* by them. I might think it may even be openly practiced, but Scripture teaches, *Neither shall ye profane my holy name; but I will be hallowed?*...Incest and murder [may not be practiced to save one’s life], even as Rabbi’s dictum. For it has been taught: Rabbi said, *For as when a man riseth against his neighbor, and slayeth him, even so is this matter.* ...etc.

Gen. Rab. 34.8.4

A. The children of Noah received seven commandments, specifically those prohibiting idolatry, fornication, murder, blasphemy,

B. enjoining the establishment of good government,

C. prohibiting stealing and cruelty to animals [“cutting a limb off a living beast”]

D. R. Haninah said, “There also was a prohibition against eating blood drawn from a living beast.”

E. R. Eleazar said, “They also were forbidden hybridization.”

F. R. Simeon said, “They also were forbidden the practice of witchcraft.”

G. R. Yohanan said, “They also were forbidden to emasculate males.”

H. R. Issi said, “The children of Noah were forbidden to do any of the things that are written in the following section: ‘There shall not be found among you any one who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire’ (Deut. 18:10).”

Jubilees 7:20–21

²⁰ And in the twenty-eighth jubilee Noah began to enjoin upon his sons’ sons the ordinances and commandments, and all the judgments that he knew, and he exhorted his sons to observe righteousness, and to cover the shame of their flesh, and to bless their Creator, and honor father and mother, and love their neighbor, and guard their souls from fornication and uncleanness and all

iniquity. ²¹For owing to these three things came the flood upon the earth, namely, owing to the fornication wherein the Watchers against the law of their ordinances went a whoring after the daughters of men, and took themselves wives of all which they chose: and they made the beginning of uncleanness.

t. Abod. Zar. 8.4–6

8.4

A. Concerning seven religious requirements were the children of Noah admonished:

B. setting up courts of justice, idolatry, blasphemy [cursing the Name of God], fornication, bloodshed, and thievery.

C. *Concerning setting up courts of justice* – how so?

D. Just as Israelites are commanded to call into session in their towns courts of justice.

E. *Concerning idolatry and blasphemy* – how so?

F. *Concerning fornication* – how so?

G. “On account of any form of prohibited sexual relationship on account of which an Israelite court inflicts the death-penalty, the children of Noah are subject to warning,” words of R. Meir.

H. And sages say, “There are many prohibited relationships on which an Israelite court does not inflict the death penalty and the children of Noah are [not] warned. In regard to these forbidden relationships the nations are judged in accord with the laws governing the nations.

I. “And you have only prohibitions of sexual relations with a betrothed maiden alone.”

8.5

A. *For bloodshed* – how so?

B. A gentile [who kills] a gentile and a gentile who kills an Israelite are liable. An Israelite [who kills] a gentile is exempt.

C. *Concerning thievery?*

D. [If] one has stolen, or robbed, and so too in the case of finding a beautiful captive [woman], and in similar cases:

E. A gentile in regard to a gentile, or a gentile in regard to an Israelite – it is prohibited. And an Israelite in regard to a gentile – it is permitted.

8.6

A. *Concerning a limb cut from a living beast* – how so?

- B. A dangling limb on a beast, [which] is not [so connected] as to bring about healing.
- C. is forbidden for use by the children of Noah, and, it goes without saying, for Israelites.
- D. but if there is [in the connecting flesh] sufficient [blood supply] to bring about healing,
- E. it is permitted to Israelites, and, goes without saying, to the children of Noah.
- F. [If] one took a bird which is not of the volume of an olive's bulk and ate it-
- G. Rabbi declares exempt
- H. And R. Eleazar b. R. Simeon declares liable.

I. Said R. Eleazar b. R. Simeon, "Now if on account of a limb from a bird [which is alive] one is liable, for the whole [bird] should not one be liable?"

- J. [If] one strangled it and ate it, he is exempt.
- K. R. Hananiah by Gamaliel says, "Also on account of blood deriving from a living beast,"
- L. R. Hidqa says, "also on account of castration."
- M. R. Simeon says, "Also on account of witchcraft."

N. R. Yose says, "On account of whatever is stated in the pericope regard the children of Noah are they subject to warning,

O. "as it is said, *There shall be found among you any one who burns his son or his daughter as an offering, anyone who practices divination, a soothsayer, or an augur, or a sorcerer, or a charmer, or a medium, or a wizard, or a necromancer* (Deut. 18:10-11).

b. Sanh. 74a

- A. [73A] And these are those who are to be saved [from doing evil] even at the cost of their lives:
- B. he who pursues after his fellow in order to kill him—
- C. after a male, or after a betrothed girl;
- D. but he who pursues a beast, he who profanes the Sabbath, he who does an act of service to an idol—they do not save them even at the cost of their lives.

Sirach 40:29

A man that looketh to a stranger's table—His life is not to be reckoned as a life: A pollution of his soul are the dainties presented, and to an understanding man inward torture.

Didache 6.3

But concerning meat, bear that which thou art able to do. But keep with care from things sacrificed to idols, for it is the worship of the infernal deities.

Philo, *Special Laws* 4.122

But some men, with open mouths, carry even the excessive luxury and boundless intemperance of Sardanapalus to such an indefinite and unlimited extent, being wholly absorbed in the invention of senseless pleasures, that they prepare sacrifices which ought never be offered, strangling their victims, and stifling the essence of life, which they ought to let depart free and unrestrained, burying the blood, as it were, in the body. For it ought to have been sufficient for them to enjoy the flesh by itself, without touching any of those parts which have a connection with the soul or life.

Jubilees 7.22–39

²²And they begat sons the Nâphîdîm, and †they were all unlike, and they devoured one another: and the Giants slew the Nâphîl, and the Nâîl slew the Eljô, and the Eljô mankind, and one man another. ²³And every one sold himself to work iniquity and to shed much blood, and the earth was filled with iniquity. ²⁴And after this they sinned against the beasts and birds, and all that moves and walks on the earth: and much blood was shed on the earth, and every imagination and desire of men imagined vanity and evil continually. ²⁵And the Lord destroyed everything from off the face of the earth; because of the wickedness of their deeds, and because of the blood which they had shed in the midst of the earth He destroyed everything. ²⁶And we were left, I and you, my sons, and everything that entered with us into the ark, and behold I see your works before me that ye do not walk in righteousness; for in the path of destruction ye have begun to walk, and ye are parting one from another, and are envious one of another, and (so it comes) that ye are not in harmony, my sons, each with his brother. ²⁷For I see, and behold the demons have begun (their) seductions against you and against your children, and now I fear on your behalf, that after my death ye will shed the blood of men upon the earth, and that ye, too, will be destroyed from the face of the earth. ²⁸For whoso sheddeth man's blood, and whoso eateth the blood of any flesh, shall all be destroyed from the earth. ²⁹And there shall not be left any man that eateth blood, or that sheddeth the blood of man on the earth, nor shall there be left to him any seed or descendants living under heaven; for into Sheol shall they go, and into the place of condemnation shall they descend, and into the darkness of the deep shall they all be removed by a violent death. ³⁰There shall be no blood seen upon you of all the blood there shall be all the days in which ye have killed any beasts or cattle or whatever flies upon the earth, and work yea good work to your souls by covering that which has been shed on the face of the earth. ³¹And ye shall not be like him who eats with blood, but guard yourselves that none may eat blood before you: cover the blood, for thus have I been commanded to testify to you and your children, together with all flesh. ³²And suffer not the soul to be eaten with the flesh, that your blood, which is your life, may not be required at the hand of any flesh that sheds (it) on the earth. ³³For the earth will not be clean from the blood which has been shed upon it; for (only) through the blood of him that shed it will the earth be purified throughout all its generations. ³⁴And now, my children, hearken: work judgment and righteousness that ye may be planted in righteousness over the face of the whole earth, and your glory lifted up before my God, who saved me from the waters of the flood. ³⁵And behold, ye will go and build for yourselves cities, and plant in them all the plants that are upon the earth, and moreover all fruit-bearing trees. ³⁶For three years the fruit of everything that is eaten will not be gathered: and in the fourth year its fruit will be accounted holy [and they will offer the first-fruits], acceptable before the Most High God, who created heaven and earth and all things. Let them offer in abundance the first of the wine and oil (as) first-fruits on the altar of the

Lord, who receives it, and what is left let the servants of the house of the Lord eat before the altar which receives (it).³⁷ And in the fifth year

.....

make ye the release so that ye release it in righteousness and uprightness, and ye shall be righteous, and all that you plant shall prosper.³⁸ For thus did Enoch, the father of your father command Methuselah, his son, and Methuselah his son Lamech, and Lamech commanded me all the things which his fathers commanded him.³⁹ And I also will give you commandment, my sons, as Enoch commanded his son in the first jubilees: whilst still living, the seventh in his generation, he commanded and testified to his son and to his son's sons until the day of his death.'

Tertullian, *Apology 9*

That I may refute more thoroughly these charges, I will show that in part openly, in part secretly, practices prevail among you which have led you perhaps to credit similar things about us. Children were openly sacrificed in Africa to Saturn as lately as the proconsulship of Tiberius, who exposed to public gaze the priests suspended on the sacred trees overshadowing their temple—so many crosses on which the punishment which justice craved overtook their crimes, as the soldiers of our country still can testify who did that very work for that proconsul. And even now that sacred crime still continues to be done in secret. It is not only Christians, you see, who despise you; for all that you do there is neither any crime thoroughly and abidingly eradicated, nor does any of your gods reform his ways. When Saturn did not spare his own children, he was not likely to spare the children of others; whom indeed the very parents themselves were in the habit of offering, gladly responding to the call which was made on them, and keeping the little ones pleased on the occasion, that they might not die in tears. At the same time, there is a vast difference between homicide and parricide. A more advanced age was sacrificed to Mercury in Gaul. I hand over the Tauric fables to their own theatres. Why, even in that most religious city of the pious descendants of Aeneas, there is a certain Jupiter whom in their games they lave with human blood. Is it the blood of a beast-fighter, you say. Is it less, because of that, the blood of a man? Or is it viler blood because it is from the veins of a wicked man? At any rate it is shed in murder. O Jove, thyself a Christian, and in truth only son of thy father in his cruelty! But in regard to child murder, as it does not matter whether it is committed for a sacred object, or merely at one's own self-impulse—although there is a great difference, as we have said, between parricide and homicide—I shall turn to the people generally. How many, think you, of those crowding around and gaping for Christian blood,—how many even of your rulers, notable for their justice to you and for their severe measures against us, may I charge in their own consciences with the sin of putting their offspring to death? As to any difference in the kind of murder, it is certainly the more cruel way to kill by drowning, or by exposure to cold and hunger and dogs. A maturer age has always preferred death by the sword. In our case, murder being once for all forbidden, we may not destroy even the foetus in the womb, while as yet the human being derives blood from other parts of the body for its sustenance. To hinder a birth is merely a speedier man-killing; nor does it matter whether you take away a life that is born, or destroy one that is coming to the birth. That is a man which is going to be one; you have the fruit already in its seed. As to meals of blood and such tragic dishes, read—I am not sure where it is told (it is in Herodotus, I think)—how blood taken from the arms, and tasted by both parties, has been the treaty bond among some nations. I am not sure what it was that was tasted in the time of Catiline. They say, too, that among some Scythian tribes the dead are eaten by their friends. But I am going far from home. At this day, among ourselves, blood consecrated to Bellona, blood drawn from a punctured thigh and then

partaken of, seals initiation into the rites of that goddess. Those, too, who at the gladiator shows, for the cure of epilepsy, quaff with greedy thirst the blood of criminals slain in the arena, as it flows fresh from the wound, and then rush off—to whom do they belong? Those, also, who make meals on the flesh of wild beasts at the place of combat—who have keen appetites for bear and stag? That bear in the struggle was bedewed with the blood of the man whom it lacerated: that stag rolled itself in the gladiator's gore. The entrails of the very bears, loaded with as yet undigested human viscera, are in great request. And you have men rifting up man-fed flesh? If you partake of food like this, how do your repasts differ from those you accuse us Christians of? And do those, who, with savage lust, seize on human bodies, do less because they devour the living? Have they less the pollution of human blood on them because they only lick up what is to turn into blood? They make meals, it is plain, not so much of infants, as of grown-up men. Blush for your vile ways before the Christians, who have not even the blood of animals at their meals of simple and natural food; who abstain from things strangled and that die a natural death, for no other reason than that they may not contract pollution, so much as from blood secreted in the viscera. To clench the matter with a single example, you tempt Christians with sausages of blood, just because you are perfectly aware that the thing by which you thus try to get them to transgress they hold unlawful. And how unreasonable it is to believe that those, of whom you are convinced that they regard with horror the idea of tasting the blood of oxen, are eager after blood of men; unless, mayhap, you have tried it, and found it sweeter to the taste! Nay, in fact, there is here a test you should apply to discover Christians, as well as the fire-pan and the censer. They should be proved by their appetite for human blood, as well as by their refusal to offer sacrifice; just as otherwise they should be affirmed to be free of Christianity by their refusal to taste of blood, as by their sacrificing; and there would be no want of blood of men, amply supplied as that would be in the trial and condemnation of prisoners. Then who are more given to the crime of incest than those who have enjoyed the instruction of Jupiter himself? Ctesias tells us that the Persians have illicit intercourse with their mothers. The Macedonians, too, are suspected on this point; for on first hearing the tragedy of Ōdipus they made mirth of the incest-doer's grief, exclaiming, ἤλαυνε εἰς τῆ ν μητέρα. Even now reflect what opportunity there is for mistakes leading to incestuous comminglings—your promiscuous looseness supplying the materials. You first of all expose your children, that they may be taken up by any compassionate passer-by, to whom they are quite unknown; or you give them away, to be adopted by those who will do better to them the part of parents. Well, some time or other, all memory of the alienated progeny must be lost; and when once a mistake has been made, the transmission of incest thence will still go on—the race and the crime creeping on together. Then, further, wherever you are—at home, abroad, over the seas—your lust is an attendant, whose general indulgence, or even its indulgence in the most limited scale, may easily and unwittingly anywhere beget children, so that in this way a progeny scattered about in the commerce of life may have intercourse with those who are their own kin, and have no notion that there is any incest in the case. A persevering and steadfast chastity has protected us from anything like this: keeping as we do from adulteries and all post-matrimonial unfaithfulness, we are not exposed to incestuous mishaps. Some of us, making matters still more secure, beat away from them entirely the power of sensual sin, by a virgin continence, still boys in this respect when they are old. If you would but take notice that such sins as I have mentioned prevail among you that would lead you to see that they have no existence among Christians. The same eyes would tell you of both facts. But the two blindnesses are apt to go together; so that those who do not see what is, think they see what is not. I shall show it to be so in everything. But now let me speak of matters which are more dear.

If, then, any one came, who had been a follower of the elders, I questioned him in regard to the words of the elders,—what Andrew or what Peter said, or what was said by Philip, or by Thomas, or by James, or by John, or by Matthew, or by any other of the disciples of the Lord, and what things Aristion and the presbyter John, the disciples of the Lord, say. For I did not think that what was to be gotten from the books would profit me as much as what came from the living and abiding voice.”

Quintilian, *Inst.* 2.2.8

Let him every day say something, and even much, which, when the pupils hear, they may carry away with them, for though he may point out to them in their course of reading plenty of examples for their imitation, yet the living voice, as it is called, feeds the mind more nutritiously, and especially the voice of the teacher, whom his pupils, if they are but rightly instructed, both love and reverence. How much more readily we imitate those whom we like can scarcely be expressed.

Pliny the Younger, *Epistle* 2.3

You will say: “But I have here authors just as learned, whose works I can read.” Granted, but you can always read an author, while you cannot always listen to him. Moreover, as the proverb goes, the spoken word is invariably much more impressive than the written one; for however lively what you read may be, it does not sink so deeply into the mind as what is pressed home by the accent, the expression, and the whole bearing and action of a speaker. This must be admitted unless we think the story of Aeschines untrue, when, after reading a speech of Demosthenes at Rhodes, he is said to have exclaimed to those who expressed their admiration of it: “Yes, but what would you have said if you had heard the beast himself?” And yet Aeschines himself, if we are to believe Demosthenes, had a very striking delivery! None the less he acknowledged that the author of the speech delivered it far better than he had done. All these things point to this, that you should hear Isaeus, if only to enable you to say that you have heard him. Farewell.

Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.12.14

This is shown in a still clearer light from the letter of the apostles, which they forwarded neither to the Jews nor to the Greeks, but to those who from the Gentiles believed in Christ, confirming their faith. For when certain men had come down from Judea to Antioch—where also, first of all, the Lord’s disciples were called Christians, because of their faith in Christ—and sought to persuade those who had believed on the Lord to be circumcised, and to perform other things after the observance of the law; and when Paul and Barnabas had gone up to Jerusalem to the apostles on account of this question, and the whole Church had convened together, Peter thus addressed them: “Men, brethren, ye know how that from the days of old God made choice among you, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the Gospel, and believe. And God, the Searcher of the heart, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as to us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore why tempt ye God, to impose a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we are to be saved, even as they.” After him James spoke as follows: “Men, brethren, Simon hath declared how God did purpose to take from among the Gentiles a people for His name. And thus do the words of the prophets agree, as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the residue of men may seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, among whom my name has been invoked, saith the Lord, doing these

things. Known from eternity is His work to God. Wherefore I for my part give judgment, that we trouble not them who from among the Gentiles are turned to God: but that it be enjoined them, that they do abstain from the vanities of idols, and from fornication, and from blood; and whatsoever they wish not to be done to themselves, let them not do to others.” And when these things had been said, and all had given their consent, they wrote to them after this manner: “The apostles, and the presbyters, [and] the brethren, unto those brethren from among the Gentiles who are in Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia, greeting: Forasmuch as we have heard that certain persons going out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law; to whom we gave no such commandment: it seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul; men who have delivered up their soul for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, that they may declare our opinion by word of mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from fornication; and whatsoever ye do not wish to be done to you, do not ye to others: from which preserving yourselves, ye shall do well, walking in the Holy Spirit.” From all these passages, then, it is evident that they did not teach the existence of another Father, but gave the new covenant of liberty to those who had lately believed in God by the Holy Spirit. But they clearly indicated, from the nature of the point debated by them, as to whether or not it were still necessary to circumcise the disciples, that they had no idea of another god.

Origen, *Against Celsus* 8.29

But it is to be observed that the Jews, who claim for themselves a correct understanding of the Law of Moses, carefully restrict their food to such things as are accounted clean, and abstain from those that are unclean. They also do not use in their food the blood of an animal nor the flesh of an animal torn by wild beasts, and some other things which it would take too long for us at present to detail. But Jesus, wishing to lead all men by His teaching to the pure worship and service of God, and anxious not to throw any hindrance in the way of many who might be benefited by Christianity, through the imposition of a burdensome code of rules in regard to food, has laid it down, that “not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man, but that which cometh out of the mouth; for whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught. But those things which proceed out of the mouth are evil thoughts when spoken, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.” Paul also says, “Meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse.” Wherefore, as there is some obscurity about this matter, without some explanation is given, it seemed good to the apostles of Jesus and the elders assembled together at Antioch, and also, as they themselves say, to the Holy Spirit, to write a letter to the Gentile believers, forbidding them to partake of those things from which alone they say it is necessary to abstain, namely, “things offered to idols, things strangled, and blood.”

Tertullian, *Modesty* 12

Accordingly, these who have received “another Paraclete” in and through the apostles,—(a Paraclete) whom, not recognizing Him even in His special prophets, they no longer possess in the apostles either;—come, now, let them, even from the apostolic instrument, teach us the possibility that the stains of a flesh which after baptism has been repolluted, can by repentance be washed away. Do we not, in the apostles also, recognize the form of the Old Law with regard to the

demonstration of adultery, how great (a crime) it is; lest perchance it be esteemed more trivial in the new stage of disciplines than in the old? When first the Gospel thundered and shook the old system to its base, when dispute was being held on the question of retaining or not the Law; this is the first rule which the apostles, on the authority of the Holy Spirit, send out to those who were already beginning to be gathered to their side out of the nations: "It has seemed (good)," say they, "to the Holy Spirit and to us to cast upon you no ampler weight than (that) of those (things) from which it is necessary that abstinence be observed; from sacrifices, and from fornications, and from blood: by abstaining from which ye act rightly, the Holy Spirit carrying you." Sufficient it is, that in this place withal there has been preserved to adultery and fornication the post of their own honor between idolatry and murder: for the interdict upon "blood" we shall understand to be (an interdict) much more upon human blood. Well, then, in what light do the apostles will those crimes to appear which alone they select, in the way of careful guarding against, from the pristine Law? which alone they prescribe as necessarily to be abstained from? Not that they permit others; but that these alone they put in the foremost rank, of course as not remissible; (they,) who, for the heathens' sake, made the other burdens of the law remissible. Why, then, do they release our neck from so heavy a yoke, except to place forever upon those (necks) these compendia of discipline? Why do they indulgently relax so many bonds, except that they may wholly bind us in perpetuity to such as are more necessary? They loosed us from the more numerous, that we might be bound up to abstinence from the more noxious. The matter has been settled by compensation: we have gained much, in order that we may render some-what. But the compensation is not revocable; if, that is, it will be revoked by iteration—(iteration) of adultery, of course, and blood and idolatry: for it will follow that the (burden of) the whole law will be incurred, if the condition of pardon shall be violated. But it is not lightly that the Holy Spirit has come to an agreement with us—coming to this agreement even without our asking; whence He is the more to be honored. His engagement none but an ungrateful man will dissolve. In that event, He will neither accept back what He has discarded, nor discard what He has retained. Of the latest Testament the condition is ever immutable; and, of course the public recitation of that decree,¹²³ and the counsel embodied therein, will cease (only) with the word.¹²⁴ He has definitely enough refused pardon to those crimes the careful avoidance whereof He selectively enjoined; He has claimed whatever He has not inferentially conceded. Hence it is that there is no restoration of peace granted by the Churches to "idolatry" or to "blood." From which final decision of theirs that the apostles should have departed, is (I think) not lawful to believe; or else, if some find it possible to believe so, they will be bound to prove it.

Ps.-Clement, *Homilies* 7.8

And this is the service He has appointed: To worship Him only, and trust only in the Prophet of truth, and to be baptized for the remission of sins, and thus by this pure baptism to be born again unto God by saving water; to abstain from the table of devils, that is, from food offered to idols, from dead carcasses, from animals which have been suffocated or caught by wild beasts, and from blood; not to live any longer impurely; to wash after intercourse; that the women on their part should keep the law of purification; that all should be sober-minded, given to good works, refraining from wrongdoing, looking for eternal life from the all-powerful God, and asking with prayer and continual supplication that they may win it." Such was Peter's counsel to the men of Sidon also. And in few days many repented and believed, and were healed. And Peter having founded a church, and set over it as bishop one of the elders who were with him, left Sidon.

Acts 15:22–23

Quintilian *Inst.* 2.2.8 (see on 15:19–21)

Pliny, *Epistle* 2.3

Isæus gave us the Promise of a bright Reputation, but has far exceeded it: He has the utmost command, plenty, and luxuriancy of Speaking. He always delivers himself in the readiest, and yet in the most exact Manner. His Style does not only carry the Purity of the Greek, but the Refinement of the Attic. His Openings are terse, easy, engaging; sometimes weighty and raised. He demands a number of his Questions from his Audience; and permits the Choice of others, and often the Sides, to them. He rises, dresses, begins; suddenly all is at hand, and in a manner all alike. His Sense more remote, his Words familiar; but of what kind? Chosen and labored. Even in his sallies of Oratory, a vast Compass of Reading and Writing shines forth. His Preface is just; his Narration clear; his Reasoning forcible; his Consequences strong; his Ornament high: he informs, delights, and affects at once, (a Thing almost incredible:) His Turns of Logic are frequent; his Syllogisms bounded and determinate; which it must be a great Mastery to execute also in a proper Style. His Memory is hardly to be conceived. He traces to the height what he uttered off-hand, and does not slip a Word. He arrived at this Habit by Study and Exercise: For, whether by Night or Day, his Acting, Hearing, Speaking, have no other Tendency. He is past the sixtieth Year of Life, and is not yet beyond the School; which indeed is the truest Scene of Simplicity, Sincerity and Goodness. For we, who are employed in the Court, and in real Disputes at Law, are obliged, though unwilling, to contract a large Vein of what is Evil. But in the School, and in the Auditory of Learning, the Cause is feigned, and the Matter itself is naked and innocent; and not less happy, especially to Men in declining Years. For what is more fortunate in old Age, than that which was the most delightful in Youth? On this Foot I judge Isæus, not only the most Eloquent, but the most Blest of Men; and if you be not desirous to know him, you have the Insensibility of Marble or Iron. Therefore come, if not upon other Accounts, or mine, yet to be one of his Audience. Did you never read of a Man that took a Journey from the Straights to view the celebrated Livy, and departed after the first sight of him? It would be ungenerous, illiterate, dull, and even almost infamous, not to value a piece of Knowledge so pleasing, fair, and humane above all others. You will urge, perhaps, that you are already furnished with Reading equal to him: True, but you have always an Opportunity of Reading, not always of Hearing. Besides, we are apt to be most affected by the living Voice, or as we say, Word of Mouth. For, tho' what you read may be more acute, yet it strikes deeper in the Mind, what is fixed in it by the Delivery, Countenance, Habit and Gesture of the Speaker; unless we can imagine that of Æschines to be false; who, upon reading the Oration of Demosthenes to the Rhodians, and a general Admiration it created, is said to have added: What if you had heard the Words of the Fury in Person, thundering it out to you? And Æschines was, if we may believe Demosthenes, possessed of a Voice extremely commanding. Yet he confessed that the same was pronounced more perfectly by the Author. All this is intended to make you an Auditor of Isæus; if it goes no farther than the bare Hearing of him. Farewell.