

THE FRIDAY NIGHT SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

THE BLOOD OF JESUS

INTRODUCTION

- A.** I always know I am on safe territory in God's sight when I preach, teach or focus in any way on the blood of Jesus.
- 1.** We are talking about the very blood which Jesus shed when he was crucified nearly 2,000 years ago.
- a.** The first evidence of Jesus shedding his blood was in the Garden of Gethsemane. 'And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.' Luke 22:44.
 - b.** The second time Jesus shed blood would have come from his flogging by Pilate's order. Matt. 27:26. Cf. John 19:1.
 - c.** The third would have followed the Roman soldiers' having set a crown of thorns on his head. Matt. 27:29. Cf. John 19:2.
 - d.** The fourth and main part of Jesus' shedding of blood was the act of crucifixion itself.
 - (1)** They nailed spikes through his hands and feet into the wooden cross.
 - (2)** This cross was hoisted upwards and dropped into a hole in the ground.
 - (3)** While hanging in extreme agony the blood dripped to the ground, flowing from his brow, his hands and feet - and possibly other parts of his body from the flogging.
 - e.** The fifth evidence of shedding blood, immediately following this death, was when a soldier 'pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water.' John 19:34.
- 2.** We are therefore referring to the actual blood that came from the body of the Son of God.
- a.** Abel's blood, shed at the hands of his brother Cain, dripped to the ground and cried out to God from the ground. Gen. 4:10-11.
 - b.** Jesus' blood, shed on the cross, would also have fallen to the ground; it too cried out to God.

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3. This blood was precious in God's sight.
 - a. Jesus was God's beloved Son who was very pleasing to him. Matt. 3:17. Cf. Matt. 17:5.
 - b. How precious was that blood to the Father - and to us. I Pet. 1:19.
 4. We therefore can be sure that any respect and honour we show to the blood of Jesus will be honouring and pleasing to God.
 - a. The man I was named after, Dr R T Williams, used to counsel young ministers, 'Honour the blood, and honour the Holy Ghost.'
 - b. I fear that the rising number of ministers in this country who have either avoided or poked fun at the blood of Christ shows no sign of abating.
 - (1) If Bible-denying liberals despise this teaching, it must be right.
 - (2) If the devil hates this teaching, it must be right.
 5. We are on safe and solid ground.
- B.** The purpose of this lesson is not only to redress the balance but also to clarify the meaning of the blood of Jesus in our day.
1. We will deal with these questions:
 - a. What is the meaning of the blood of Jesus?
 - (1) Is it a phrase that simply refers to the cross, or Jesus' death?
 - (2) Is there value in the literal blood of Jesus itself?
 - b. What does the blood of Jesus do:
 - (1) For God?
 - (2) To Satan?
 - (3) For us?

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2. We will also deal with the meaning of Atonement, how the work of Christ on the cross is applied to our lives and its relevance in spiritual warfare.

C. Why is this study important?

1. It focuses on the greatest event in the history of mankind: the death of Jesus on the cross.
2. It focuses on the meaning and purpose of Christ's death: atonement.
3. It comes to terms with a phrase or word ('the blood of Jesus', 'the blood', etc.) which appears no fewer than thirty-five times in the New Testament.
4. It shows the connection between the Old Testament and the New Testament.
5. It shows what is the basis of our fellowship with the Father.
6. It shows what must be preached and taught in a generation that knows so little about Christ's atonement.
7. It brings us face to face with one of the most essential ingredients in spiritual warfare.

I THE MEANING OF BLOOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

- A.** Why would we go to the Old Testament before speaking directly about the blood of Jesus? Answer:

1. The gospel is for the Jew first. Rom. 1:16.
 - a. Every Jew would have an understanding of blood, based on the teaching he or she would have received already.
 - b. There would be little need to say more, once it was understood that the blood of Jesus took the place of the blood shed by sacrifices under the Old Covenant.
2. There is no discontinuity between the Old Testament and the New Testament.
 - a. Every new convert would know that the faith of Christ had its roots in the God of Israel.
 - b. Therefore the teaching about the blood shed in ancient Israel would underlie the Atonement of Christ and all its implications.
3. The common use of the way the blood shed was understood in ancient times would carry over in its fulfilment in Christ. Heb. 10:1.

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- B.** The 'law of first mention'.
1. A time-honoured hermeneutical method is especially relevant for the teaching on the subject of blood.
 - a. Hermeneutics (def.): the science of biblical interpretation.
 - b. Many Bible teachers consider this fundamental to much theological interpretation.
 2. The 'law of first mention' (def.): the way a word is first used in the Bible will be the way this word is largely understood thereafter. For example:
 - a. Sin. Gen. 4:7. Sin, not doing what is right, leads to mastery over us.
 - b. Covenant. Gen. 6:18. Its first use was to be the way it would be generally understood thereafter: what God promises to do.
 - c. Faith. Gen. 15:6. Faith is essentially believing God.
 - d. Tears. II Kings 20:5. God takes special note of our tears.
- C.** The first use of 'blood': 'The LORD said, "What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground.'" Gen. 4:10.
1. Abel's blood cried out to God.
 2. It was an appeal for God to act.
 3. It was literal blood, which fell into the ground.
 4. God heard the cry.
 5. The blood continued to make its own appeal, even though the person whose blood it was had died.
- D.** When God first required blood from a sacrifice. Ex. 12.
1. Literal blood was required, not just the taking of life. 'Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the door-frames of the houses where they eat the lambs.' Ex. 12:7.
 - a. Each man was to take a lamb for his family. Ex. 12:3.
 - b. The lamb was to be slaughtered. Ex. 12:6.

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- (1) On the lobes of the right ears.
- (2) On the thumbs of the right hands.
- (3) On the big toes of the right feet. Ex. 29:19-21.

- 3. The offerings.
 - a. The burnt offering. Lev. 1.
 - b. The fellowship offering. Lev. 3.
 - c. The sin offering. Lev. 4 & 5.
 - d. The guilt offering. Lev. 7.
- 4. The Mercy Seat: the Day of Atonement. Lev. 16.
 - a. The High Priest went into the Holy of Holies once a year, but never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance. Heb. 9:7.
 - b. He took the blood of a bull and a goat. Lev. 16:14-15.
 - c. He sprinkled it with his finger seven times on the cover, or lid, of the Ark of the Covenant (called the Mercy Seat). 'He is to take some of the bull's blood and with his finger sprinkle it on the front of the atonement cover; then he shall sprinkle some of it with his finger seven times before the atonement cover.' Lev. 16:14.
 - d. The purpose of this ritual was to cleanse the sanctuary (Lev. 16:18), the priest and his household (Lev. 16:6) and the people. 'Because on this day atonement will be made for you, to cleanse you. Then, before the LORD, you will be clean from all your sins.' Lev. 16:30.
- 5. The prayer of David, the returning backslider: 'Cleanse me [by sprinkling] with [a bunch of] hyssop and I shall be clean; wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.' Ps. 51:7.

II THE BLOOD OF JESUS

- A. Sometimes the term 'blood' merely denotes *death* by shedding blood.
 - 1. The death of the prophets. Matt. 23:30,35.
 - 2. Death by martyrdom. Heb. 12:4. Cf. Acts 22:20.

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3. The death of Jesus. Matt. 27:4,24-25; Acts 5:28.
 4. Note: some want to make the phrase 'the blood of Christ' to refer symbolically to the death of Christ - meaning the way he died, by shedding his blood: Acts 20:26; Rom. 3:25; 5:9; I Cor. 10:16; Eph. 1:7; 2:13; Col. 1:14(margin),20; Rev. 1:5; 5:9.
- B.** The pre-history that we have examined from the Old Testament shows how the phrase 'blood of Christ' was intended to be understood.
1. More than the blood of the animal was required; the blood was collected and sprinkled (applied).
 2. To the Jewish mind the reference to Christ's blood meant:
 - a. His death by shedding his blood on the cross.
 - b. The importance of the blood that was shed.
 3. The way the blood of Christ is treated in so many places - where it meant *more* than Jesus' mere death - are enough to indicate how the references to his blood were meant to be understood:
 - a. His death on a cross.
 - b. The value of the blood that was spilt.
- C.** The epistle to the Hebrews.
1. The reference to the Day of Atonement.
 - a. 'But only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance.' Heb. 9:7.
 - b. Comparison to the blood of animals. 'He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption.' Heb. 9:12.
 - c. The reference to cleansing. 'How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!' Heb. 9:14.
 2. The comparison of the two covenants.

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- a. The first covenant was 'not put into effect without blood.' Heb. 9:18.
 - b. We will recall how the blood was collected and then sprinkled on the people. 'When Moses had proclaimed every commandment of the law to all the people, he took the blood of calves, together with water, scarlet wool and branches of hyssop, and sprinkled the scroll and all the people.' Heb. 9:19.
 - c. There is no way these references to Christ's blood could be euphemisms for his death; special attention and application of the *blood* was required.
 - (1) The blood was sprinkled on the very premises of the tabernacle. Heb. 9:21.
 - (2) 'In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.' Heb. 9:22.
- D.** The sprinkling.
- 1. The Greek *rantizo* (to sprinkle) or *rantismos* (sprinkling) mean 'to spray or sprinkle something with something.'
 - a. It may refer to any liquid: water, oil, blood.
 - b. The second word (for sprinkling) is not found in ancient literature outside the Bible.
 - 2. It is used five times in Hebrews: Heb. 9:13,19,21; 10:22 and 12:24.
 - a. These references compare Christ's death to the Day of Atonement; how the blood is *applied*.
 - b. Hebrews 12:24 can only refer to the Mercy Seat, or its equivalent in heaven: 'To Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.'
 - 3. Peter used it once: 'Through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood.' I Pet. 1:2b,c,d.
 - a. This refers to blood that has been *applied*.
 - (1) The blood was sacrificed on the altar, so Jesus died on the cross.
 - (2) The blood was sprinkled on the Mercy Seat; Jesus entered heaven itself with his blood.
 - b. This is Peter's meaning: the sanctifying Spirit applies the blood.

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4. It is implied in I John 1:7: 'But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.'
- E.** The Lord's Supper: in two parts.
1. The bread symbolises the body. 'While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body.'" Matt. 26:26.
 2. The cup symbolises the blood. 'Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.'" Matt. 26:27,28.
 - a. Prayer of thanks preceded each act of worship.
 - b. This demonstrates how special recognition was given to the blood.
 - (1) If the term 'blood of Christ' only meant Christ's death, the eating of the body would have been sufficient for the Lord's Supper.
 - (2) But the separate reference to the blood distinguishes it.
- F.** 'Christ, our Passover lamb.' I Cor. 5:7.
1. This 'throw away' comment by Paul proves that Passover pre-figured Christ's death.
 2. We may therefore see how Jesus' hanging on the cross, set against the sprinkled blood at Passover, brings to mind those glorious words: 'When I see the blood, I will pass over you.' This means:
 - a. The literal blood of Jesus.
 - b. It was a sign - to us and to God.
 - c. It was visible to God.
 - d. It was protection.
 - e. It set God free to save us.
 - f. It took our place.

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- g.** It is our covering.

CONCLUSION

A. We may therefore conclude:

- 1.** It satisfies God's justice. Rom. 3:25-26.
- 2.** It defeats Satan. See Rev. 12:11.
- 3.** It cleanses us. I John 1:7.

B. If the blood of the covenant consecrated priests, was sprinkled on premises and on the people, then:

- 1.** The blood of Christ *applied by the Spirit* will do even *more!* Cf. Heb. 9:14. It can be:
 - a.** Sprinkled on us.
 - b.** Sprinkled on the ministry.
 - c.** Sprinkled on our premises - church and home or whatever pertains to us.
- 2.** All this is true, according to our faith. Rom. 3:26.
 - a.** The blood must be applied.
 - b.** This is done by the Spirit - when we exercise faith.

C. No wonder, then, that Peter called Christ's blood 'precious'. I Pet. 1:19.