

## **Introduction: Victory through Faith: Doctrine of the Blood of Christ: Definition; Significance of Animal Blood in the Old Testament**

### **C. The Doctrine of the Blood of Christ:**

#### **A. Definition:**

1. Jesus Christ did not bleed to death on the cross. In His physical death He made a volitional decision to give up His soul to the care of the Holy Spirit and His human spirit into the presence of the Father. Several verses document these facts.

**John 10:17** - "I lay down My life that I may take it again.

**v 18** - "No man has taken it away from Me but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father."

**Luke 23:43** - And (Jesus) said to the (criminal), "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in paradise."

**v 46** - And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice said, "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit." And having said this, He breathed His last.

2. These passages indicate that the Lord died an unique physical death in that He did not expire due to natural causes. He dismissed His Own human spirit.

3. The passage in John 10:17-18 indicates that He had the authority to exit physical life in this fashion.

4. The reason He died physically was two fold, (1) His sacrificial work on the cross was completed and (2) He had to then prepare for the resurrection and the resurrection body.

5. Consequently, the Lord did not bleed to death on the cross neither did His *literal* blood contribute anything to His sacrificial work for our salvation.

6. I realize that this may be viewed by some to be heresy but it is not. I must remind you that doctrines are not built upon understanding

gleaned from one passage of Scripture. Doctrines are developed by pulling together all information in the Bible on a given subject and drawing a doctrinal conclusion.

7. This conclusion must be in harmony with all other categories of revealed truth.

8. Therefore, we must be wary of holding inflexibly to traditional beliefs when they are exposed through biblical scholarship to be in error.

9. Erroneous tradition does not edify. Biblical enlightenment does. Biblical enlightenment reveals previously undisclosed truths while loyalty to an erroneous belief serves only to obscure those truths for the sake of tradition.

10. It is important before we begin our study to consult the lexicons:

Arndt, William F. and F. Wilber Gingrich. *A Greek-English Lexicon*. 2d ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979, pp. 22-23:

αἷμα /haima /, blood. 2. fig. b. blood and life as an expiatory sacrifice—especially of the blood of Jesus as a means of expiation.

Kittel, Gerhard (ed.). *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Vol. 1. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964; pp. 174-75:

... the “blood of Christ” is a graphic phrase for the death of Christ in its soteriological significance.

... concepts which belong to the language of sacrifice do not mean that cultic notions of sacrifice are bound up with the blood of Christ. ... the early Christian representation of the blood of Christ as sacrificial blood is simply the metaphorical garment clothing the thought of the self-offering, the obedience to God, which Christ demonstrated in the crucifixion. The history of belief in the atoning power of blood, esp. among the Israelites, does not help us to understand the ideas which the New Testament links with the blood of Christ, since (this phrase) is simply a pregnant verbal symbol for the saving work of Christ.

Carson, D. A. *Exegetical Fallacies*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984, p. 33-34:

The phrase *the blood of Jesus* refers to Jesus' violent, sacrificial death. In general, the blessings that the Scriptures show to be accomplished or achieved by the blood of Jesus are equally said to be accomplished or achieved by the death of Jesus.

12. With these observations in view, we will in our study of the "blood of Christ" note two applications, (1) the literal blood refers to the Lord's somatic death while (2) the figurative emphasizes His spiritual death and saving work on the cross.

#### B. Significance of the Animal Blood of the Old Testament:

1. The Hebrew word for "blood" is *dam* and occurs over three hundred times, two thirds referring to death and violence and one third to animal sacrifices.

2. It is noteworthy that of the five Levitical sacrifices, four involve the execution of an animal through the loss of its physical blood.

3. It is significant that in the Old Testament there could be no atonement for sins without the shedding of blood.

**Hebrews 9:22** - According to the Law nearly all things were cleansed with animal blood. In fact, without the shedding of animal blood there is no forgiveness.

4. But we know there can be no forgiveness of sins apart from the work of Christ on the cross. The animal sacrifices depicted that work in anticipation.

5. Thus, the process of the sacrificial animal bleeding to death represented the saving work of Christ on the cross.

6. In fact, the physical death of the animal was a type portraying the spiritual death of Christ, the antitype.

7. Thus, the phrase, "the blood of Christ," is a representative analogy which compares the physical death of the Levitical sacrifices with the spiritual death of Christ.

8. Ritual pointed toward reality. The Levitical priest would take the lamb offered by an Israelite and tie it to the horns of the altar. He would then place one hand on the animal and his other on the one who brought it. The sins of the Israelite would then be transferred from him over to the innocent animal.

Following what amounted to rebound, the priest would then take a knife and cut the animal's carotid artery. He would then catch the blood which flowed from the dying animal in a basin. The death of the animal was violent but he could not escape since he was tied to the altar.

9. A tremendous amount of typology related to soteriology and Christology was taught during these rituals:

- a. The priest represents the people as he places his hand on the head of the animal.
- b. Placing the hand on the animal's head was a type for identification of the people's sin with an innocent substitute.
- c. The innocent animal was without spot and blemish thus depicting the impeccability of the Savior in His true humanity.
- d. The blood represents the life of the animal and its loss is indicative of its death. This is the type pointing to the spiritual death of Christ on the cross.
- e. The violence and trauma of the animal's death was a type for the suffering and punishment endured by the Lord as He was being judged as our substitutionary sacrifice.
- f. In the burnt offering the fire represented judgment and the burning of the animal's flesh portrayed the fact that Jesus Christ, who knew no sin, was made sin as a substitute for us.
- g. And of course, the altar was a type of the cross. The horns were symbolic of the Messiah being nailed to it.

10. As the Israelite watched this spectacle he was made aware of principles of soteriology which would be fulfilled by the antitype, the coming Messiah who history came to know as Jesus Christ.