

TLCBiblical.com Video Lessons

203 - The Sanctity Of Blood

1. Introduction

One of the most powerful and recognized elements in the Bible is blood. This single figure provides a physical and spiritual link that ties the entire narrative together. In this lesson we'll discuss **The Sanctity Of Blood** and the way in which multiple facets of God's plan are united in a powerful way.

2. Exploring the figure of blood

In this lesson I'm jumping into the deep end of the pool so to speak but in the following lessons I'll tie all the threads together. Exploring the appearance of blood and its significance will demonstrate how other figurative forms such as the sacrifices are related. Blood is something we see throughout the Bible. Sometimes its in the forefront while at other times its in the background. At some points the presence of blood is implied and when we think about certain aspects of the text we'll begin to appreciate the depth and complexity of the message. Just about everyone who studies the Bible is aware of the blood of Christ and his sacrifice but may not have knowledge of how that sacrifice is connected to the Mosaic period or even the Patriarchal dispensation.

One of the goals of this study is to gain an awareness of the way in which all three dispensations are connected and how. Over the years I've noticed that people believe in Jesus and celebrate his resurrection but in their minds there's a disconnect between those events and the rest of the Bible. There are several elements that will lead us directly to the sacrifice of Christ but none of them are as intimately linked to not only Jesus but the entire narrative. As we develop this lesson I hope you'll begin to see those connections and deepen your awareness of the diversity in presentation of the symbolic forms we're studying.

In order to appreciate this figure we need to identify its functions, uses and behavior in the scriptures. There are five of these that I'll review. These are:

- a. The sanctification of blood
- b. The idea of sacrifice
- c. Blood as a barrier
- d. Blood as an agent of sanctification & purification
- e. and blood & redemption

I think its important to note before I get into the meat of the lesson that while blood is a powerful physical, spiritual and figurative element, there's no power in blood itself. In the last lesson when I discussed numbers I made the point that there wasn't any power in the numbers that we examined. The power was God. That takes the mysticism out of the figure and redirects

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our attention to God who is the power behind all of these things. When we take a look at primitive and pagan cultures we find they ascribed power to blood itself. The practice of drinking blood and other things is partly based on the idea that there's some energy in the fluid that can be assimilated. Another statement that I've made and will continue to bring up from time to time is that my aim is to demystify the Bible. The power is God. The figures and symbols he has used and put in place are there to remind us of his ability, not some quality of the object.

Keep these things in mind and let's start by discussing the sanctification of blood.

3. The sanctification of blood

The figure of blood and its importance emerges slowly in the narrative. In the account of creation when man is formed we see the focus placed on the breath of life that made man a living soul (**Gen 2.7**). This is paired with the statement that man was made in the image of God. From that point on we might think that the emphasis related to the sacredness of life would be placed on the breath, the figure of a soul bestowed by the Lord. But the image shifts and we find the emphasis placed elsewhere.

Cain and Abel, the first sons of Adam and Eve, are described in Genesis chapter four. We're told that Abel was a keeper of sheep while Cain was a "*tiller of the ground*" (**Gen 4.2**). There are some aspects of the story that we'll discuss in more depth when we cover sacrifices but for now we'll focus on the events that take place in relation to our discussion of blood.

The first thing to remember is that this is the Patriarchal period. A time in which God spoke to man through the male head of the family. In this case that would be Adam. While we don't have a complete record of all that God commanded we can come to some conclusions based on the text. We'll revisit some of this later as I noted a moment ago when we talk about sacrifices. The point is that offerings were being made to God. Abel brought of his sheep as an offering to God which was accepted (**Gen 4.4**) while Cain presented an offering to God of his harvest (**Gen 4.3**) which was not accepted by the Lord. This angered Cain and God spoke to him.

We're told, "*...Cain was very wrath, and his countenance fell. And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wrath? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door.*" (**Gen 4.5-7**). On the surface we may find this confusing but having the advantage of the complete revelation of God's word we can apply some principles found throughout the scriptures. There are numerous places in the text that informs us that God is not a respecter of persons. In other words God doesn't arbitrarily play favorites. Paul states, "*For there is no respect of persons with God.*" (**Rom 2.11**). We also find Peter stating something similar to this at the house of Cornelius when he notes, "*Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and*

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worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.” (Acts 10.34-35). Let’s apply this principle to this event.

If Abel was offering a sacrifice that was accepted by God and Cain did not, and, God is no respecter of persons, then its logical to conclude that God had commanded a sacrifice such as Abel offered. This is consistent with the statement about Abel in the New Testament which tells us, “*By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.*” (Heb 11.4).

So, the scenario is this. God commanded a sacrifice. The sacrifice was to be an animal here identified specifically as being of the flock. Abel offered of his flock and is described as being faithful to God. Cain on the other hand offered of his harvest. His offering wasn’t acceptable to God. God’s rejection led Cain to be angry. God intervened letting Cain know that it was possible to be acceptable if he did that which was commanded. From that point on we know how the story goes. Cain became angry about being rejected by God but decided to take his anger and hate out on Abel and killed him (Gen 4.8).

God obviously knows what Cain has done but questions him about it. When asked about Abel, Cain answers, “*I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?*” (Gen 4.9). Now we have a powerful statement that comes from the Lord. Up to this point we’ve seen the breath of life being the aspect which not only animated man but made him a living soul. If we were to imagine what would be used to signify the loss of life we might describe it in terms of breath. But that’s not what God uses. Note the Lord’s response. “*What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.*” (Gen 4.10).

In our day and age we’re familiar with the term bloodshed and instantly use that to describe the loss of life. But this was early in the narrative. It’s the first murder. There hasn’t been any bloodshed. It’s the breath that was focused on in creation but here God highlights blood as the element that denotes the loss of life. In this powerful statement God unites the idea of life with the presence of blood. He calls out the fact that Abel’s death is pronounced not by the loss of breath but by the bloodletting that has occurred. God also indicates very strongly that the spirit of life is paired with blood and the shedding of blood indicates the passing of a soul. The fact that God intervenes, confronts Cain and brings the blood to the forefront tells us that the presence of blood, and therefore life, is sacred. Moving forward a few chapters we find the sanctity of life and therefore blood made even clearer.

After the flood, recorded in Genesis chapters six through nine, we find God speaking to Noah and his family as they emerge from the ark. God issues directives that are to be remembered throughout time and have been preserved in the family of man. One of these deals

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specifically with blood and the loss of life and another details the sacred nature of blood in the sight of God as he pronounces a prohibition concerning it.

First we see the sanctification of blood itself. God states, ***“Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things. But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat.”*** (Gen 9.3-4). Note that there’s a significant change being made here. In the beginning Adam and Eve were told to eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden and every green ***“herb”*** bearing seed as meat, or food (Gen 1.29). Now after the flood God makes a change. For the first time animals can be eaten, or as we read a minute ago, ***“every moving thing”***. This is significant. The added stipulation is that they weren’t to eat animals with the blood in them and logically, they weren’t to eat the blood itself. Why? Because the life of the flesh is in the blood! This command or law is still in effect in our time and is one of three universal laws given to all mankind by God. We find this restated in the New Testament in Acts as questions concerning what the Gentile converts were to observe (Acts 15.20) and its clearly stated in the Law of Moses. So we have blood specifically described as the life and is set aside, or sanctified and is not to be consumed which makes it holy in God’s sight.

Secondly, God told Noah and his family, ***“And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man’s brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.”*** (Gen 9.5-6). This statement brings out more detail than we had in the discussion of the murder of Abel. God clearly sets a prohibition against taking life. In the narrative so far we find that there are two individuals who have committed murder, Cain (Gen 4.8) and Lamech (Gen 4.23-24). From the description of the state of the world before the flood the violence that filled the Earth probably included murder (Gen 6.11). The violence leading to such an act as we see in our own time was based on emotion, greed or hatred that resulted in the desire to destroy another human. God however declares that life is sacred, the blood is not to be shed and a penalty for killing is issued against man and animal. God also issues a sanction that those who commit murder are to lose their own lives and this is to be carried out by other humans. The idea that we want to focus on here is that the emphasis is on the blood as a representation of life and life is a sacred gift from God. We can summarize what we know about the reasons why blood is sanctified by God and draw some conclusions from the text.

1. Blood represents life itself
2. Life was created and is given by God and therefore sacred
3. Blood is paired with the breath as representing life and the soul
4. Blood is not to be considered common and should not be eaten
5. The taking of life forfeits one’s life in return

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Now that we've seen that blood has been sanctified by God we can examine how this is paired with the idea of sacrifice.

4. Blood and the idea of sacrifice

From a very early point in the biblical narrative the idea of sacrifice emerges as a practice of the faithful. Although there isn't a record of God's command to make such offerings to him its logical to conclude that the Lord had imparted these instructions to the patriarchs. As we've seen, the practice of making a sacrifice to God is presented in the story of Cain and Abel.

In Genesis chapter four, we're not given any detail about how Abel offered his sacrifices. As we move forward in the text we find that those who are faithful to God also made such offerings to the Lord. This includes Noah (**Gen 8.20**), Abraham who we are told built an altar to the Lord (**Gen 12.7**) and Job (**Job 1**). In these instances we don't find any specific instructions recorded. We can conclude however that the instructions they were given would be similar in some respects to those detailed in the Law of Moses. We'll have to reserve a full study of the Law for a later time but its important for us to take a look at the prominence and presence of blood in relation to these. The common element in all sacrifices is that the life of the animal is taken and the blood is shed. The Law clarifies this point very well and details how the priests are to perform a variety of sacrifices. The following chart details what was to be done with the blood from a variety of sacrifices.

Offering	Type	Where	Blood	Body	Ref
Male of the herd	Burnt	Door of Tabernacle	Sprinkled round about the altar	Burned	Lev 1.2-9
Male of flocks	Burnt	North side of altar	Sprinkled round about the altar	Burned	Lev 1.10-13
Fowl	Burnt	Altar	Wrung out at side of altar	Burned	Lev 1.14-17
Herd M/F	Peace	Door of Tabernacle	Sprinkled round about the altar	Burned	Lev 3.1-5
Flock M/F - Lamb	Peace	Before Tabernacle	Sprinkled round about the altar	Burned	Lev 3.6-11
Flock M/F - Goat	Peace	Before Tabernacle	Sprinkled round about the altar	Burned	Lev 3.12-16

Figure 1 Disposition of blood of burnt and peace offerings

In each example the animal was killed in a way that allowed the priests to collect the blood. The blood was then sprinkled or poured around the altar. In regard to the sin offerings the blood was placed on the fingers of the priest who then sprinkled the blood seven times toward the vail separating the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. Some of the blood was applied to the "**horns**" of the altar of incense and then the rest was to be poured at the bottom of the altar of burnt offering (**Lev 4.1-35**). The process can be summarized as follows:

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1. Sacrifices were commanded as part of the Law
2. The sacrificial animals were to be “*without spot or blemish*” - the best
3. The animal was killed and the blood collected
4. Blood was then sprinkled, poured or applied to the altar of burnt offering, incense & before the veil

Now let's break down the symbolic elements in this.

1. Sacrifices represented the taking of a life or shedding of blood
2. Animals were to be spotless and without defect
3. The body was destroyed by fire but the blood was presented before the Lord
4. The sacrifices represented the future sacrifice of Christ as we learn in **Heb 9.15**
5. The sacrifices are therefore a type of Christ representing his sinless nature / innocence
6. Those who faithfully offered acceptable sacrifices were being covered by Christ's sacrifice although it hadn't taken place yet.

The sin of Israel in later years, as they departed from the Law, is that they failed to offer acceptable sacrifices to the Lord which brought God's wrath on them. The sacrifices were a critical link to the future sacrifice of Christ and when neglected the mercy of God was not available to them. The writer of Hebrews speaks of this link and the figurative nature of the sacrifices. *“For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.”* (Heb 9.13-15).

The writer of Hebrews is explaining why the sacrifice of Christ is superior to the sacrifices of the Law. Christ was the sinless son of God who was sent into the world to save all of mankind. The sacrifices under the Law of Moses were put in place as a proxy if you will until the fullness of time came as Paul speaks of in **Galatians 4.4**. This would also apply to the sacrifices of Abel and all the faithful as we can see from the discussion of faith in Hebrews chapter eleven. How is this connected?

In a previous lesson I stated that God acts in the present as though things in the future are already in the past. God had the plan to save mankind in place before the world was created (**Titus 1.1-2, Eph 1.1-4**). The sacrifice of Christ was going to happen. God would see to that and so concealed his plan to save mankind from the world as Paul stated in **1 Corinthians 2.8**. The faithful, commanded to offer sacrifices, were being covered by the sacrifice of Christ which wouldn't occur for many years. The sacrifices were critical to the spiritual health of the nation of

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Israel as they were the people through whom the Messiah would come into the world. Sacrifice wasn't just an idea, it was a physical symbol and type of a better and greater sacrifice that would come about by the design and faithfulness of God.

5. Blood as a barrier

In Genesis three when sin entered the world, the relationship with God was breached. From that time God promised that one would come to defeat the power of Satan who had deceived and seduced man. The first prophecy in the Bible was issued by the Lord as he detailed changes and conditions that were to be imposed on humanity. Speaking to Satan, God stated, ***“And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”*** (Gen 3.15). When the Messiah came into the world the devil would be able to bruise his heel, speaking of Christ's death on the cross, but the seed of the woman would deal a death blow to the power of Satan through the resurrection. We see this brought out in the book of Hebrews.

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage...” (Heb 2.14-15). Sin that separated mankind from God was an obstacle that could only be taken out of the way by the sacrifice of Christ. Until and unless God achieved his plan mankind would be lost and powerless against the wrath of God. Note what Paul states in his letter to the Romans. ***“Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.”*** (Rom 5.9). The ultimate purpose of God was to redeem man from the fear of death and an eternity of separation from Him. The blood of Christ is the barrier that provides that protection. In the Old Testament the story of the Passover displays God's power and his use of blood as a barrier that saves.

The final plague God brought on the Egyptians was the death of the firstborn (Ex 11.5). In preparation for this the Lord gave Moses instructions that would save the Hebrews. First note the description of the lamb to be used. ***“Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats...”*** (Ex 12.5). Comparing this lamb to the sacrifices later described we find that the quality is the same - without spot or blemish. The lamb was to be separated on the tenth day of the first month and on the fourteenth day in the evening they were to kill the lamb (Ex 12.3, 6). As part of this observance they were to mark their dwellings with blood from the lamb. ***“And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses...”*** (Ex 12.7). God explains what this would mean.

“And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I

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see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.” (Ex 12.13). The firstborn of Egypt would die but the Hebrews would be saved by the blood of the lamb. This was a physical event that not only brought about the deliverance of the Hebrews but also foreshadowed the sacrifice of Christ. We can see these elements connected in the scriptures. John the baptizer refers to Jesus as the lamb of God (**John 1.29, 36**) and Paul refers to Christ as our Passover who has been sacrificed for us (**1 Cor 5.7**). Christ was sent into the world to offer himself as the only acceptable sacrifice that would provide the saving barrier between mankind and the wrath of God. We can compare the Passover and the use of blood with Christ to see these connections. Note the following chart.

Passover Lamb	Christ
Death would save the Hebrews	Death of Christ saved mankind
Separated from flock 10th day	Separated by God before world began
Blood preserved the Hebrews	Blood of Christ redeems the obedient
Blood physically applied to doorposts & lintels	Blood spiritually applied to our soul when we obey

Figure 2 Comparison of the Passover lamb & Christ

1. The death of the Passover lamb was to save the Hebrews
2. The death of Christ was to save mankind
3. The Passover lamb was separated from the flock on the tenth day
4. Christ was separated or sanctified as the sacrifice of God before the world began
5. The blood of the Passover lamb preserved the life of the firstborn of the Hebrews
6. The blood of Christ redeems the obedient from death and the wrath of God
7. The Hebrews had to apply the blood to the doorposts and lintels as God instructed
8. God applies the blood of Christ to our soul when we obey him

As we compare these things we see how God engineered and used physical situations to embody a powerful symbolic element in such things as the Passover. The connection with Christ and the nature of the sacrifice that would be made also foreshadows the terror and taking of an innocent life to save the world.

6. Blood as an agent of sanctification and purification

The utilization of blood as a means of sanctification can also be seen in the scriptures. The Hebrews were sanctified, or set apart, by the blood which formed a spiritual boundary between those faithful to God and those outside His saving presence. As the Biblical narrative progresses this

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representation is expanded to include the consecration of God's people and specifically the priests who would minister before Him. The gradual unfolding of the narrative shows how God used physical means to represent more definite spiritual characteristics. The preparation of the priests and people demonstrate this.

God stated the purpose for the nation of Israel. *“Now, therefore if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then shall ye be a peculiar treasure unto me above all the people; for all the earth is mine. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.”* (Exodus 19.5-6). Notice that God indicates a purpose for the nation, but only if they faithfully observe the commands He issues. This also points to the future as Moses states, *“But the Lord hath taken you and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, even out of Egypt, to be unto Him a people of inheritance.”* (Deuteronomy 4.20). The ultimate inheritance would be in answer to the promise made to Abraham that all nations would be blessed through his offspring (Genesis 12.3).

God appointed the priests and Levites to be his representatives before the people and as such they were consecrated for this special role. God specified the manner in which the priests were to be sanctified for their office. In the consecration we find the combined elements of the sacrifices and their blood used to sanctify them. Within the nation the priests and Levites were to remain faithful and guide the people in service to God. God directed the sprinkling of blood upon the priests (Ex 29.19-46) as part of their sanctification thus making them *“hallowed”* or holy (Ex 29.21).

The blood used in this manner would have had no significance had it not been for the command of God. In short it was in the mind of God to utilize blood to represent the purifying of the priests as preparation for their duties. The writer of Hebrews states that the book of the Law, as well as all the people, were sprinkled with blood (Heb 9.19) which was for their purification (Heb 9.13). The actual purification again rested in the mind of God who commanded this to be done.

7. Blood and redemption

We've seen that the idea of sacrifice emerged very early in the biblical narrative and concluded that this was the command of God. I've discussed the aspects of sacrifice under the Law of Moses and how these represented the coming offering of Christ for the sins of the world. The priests, Levites, the book of the law and the people were all consecrated or sanctified with blood as we read in Exodus twenty-nine. We've seen that this plan was in the mind of God before the world was created and the first prophecy in the Bible was by God who spoke of the coming of the seed of the woman who would bruise the head of the serpent representing Satan. We can now review how the sacrifices stand as a type of Christ and specifically the way in which their blood represented

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salvation through the blood that was shed.

The animal sacrifices represented the putting away of sin by their death. Once disposed of these animals were replaced by other offerings thus bringing to mind the sins of the people on a yearly basis. In contrast to this Christ died for the sins of the world, but through sinless obedience to God, He was raised again. Paul states, “***But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.***” (1 Corinthians 15.20). To the Colossians Paul writes, “***And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.***” (Col 1.18). It was through the sacrifice of the body of Christ that reconciliation to God was accomplished (Col 1.20, Heb 10.10) and by means of the resurrection he became the surety of a better covenant (Heb 7.21-24, 8.6). Christ was the fulfillment of the work of God to reconcile man to Himself spiritually (John 4.34) and it is his blood, like that of the sacrifices that provides redemption.

Just as the sacrificial animals were killed and their blood shed, so Christ was killed on the cross, shedding his blood which would save mankind. The blood of Christ would redeem those who would believe in him and obey God’s commands. Peter speaks of redemption through the blood of Christ, stating, “***Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot...***” (1 Pet 1.18-19).

Paul also speaks of the spiritual unification of Jews and Gentiles in the family of God and points to the blood of Christ as the agent by which this was possible. “***Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.***” (Eph 2.11-13).

Blood leaves a trail that begins with the first sacrifices and leads to the death of Christ. By this the faithful of all ages are linked to the sacrifice of Christ and God’s plan to redeem mankind. The spiritual representation of salvation by the shedding of blood serves to unify the Bible as a whole rather than a group of disorganized texts. We can summarize how this is expressed in the scriptures.

1. God’s plan to save mankind was in place before the world was created
2. God prophesied that the seed of woman would bruise the head of the serpent - Satan

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3. Sacrifices served as a type of Christ until the fullness of time
4. Christ offered the final sacrifice for sin by laying down his life or shedding his blood
5. The faithful of all time are connected by the blood of Christ through faith & obedience

8. Next

The faithful before the time of Christ are connected to the saving blood through their sacrifices. In our day and time how are we connected to the blood of Christ? In the next video I'll discuss the **Figure Of Water** and the role it plays in God's plan to save mankind.