***The Doctrine of Blood  
RO28-02***

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Our study is "Justification by Faith." This is segment number six on Romans 3:24-26.

**Christians Today**

If there is any single problem that stands out in sharp focus relative to the local church and to Christianity today, it is the fact that the average Christian has practically no biblical frame of reference to live by. The average Christian is abysmally ignorant of what the Bible has to say. Beyond the knowledge of a few stories, he has absolutely no capacity to take hold of the Word of God and to use it in any form in his life.

This is not to say that the local church ministry and the individual local church member is not flooded with all kinds of church programs. This is not to say that he is not surrounded by one glamorous event after another. He has plenty of famed personalities who are speaking to him. There are religious books without end. And there is no cessation of new approaches to the Christian life; new ways of doing things; and, new ways of looking at things. He has plenty of programs, and plenty of glamor, and plenty of activity. The thing he doesn't have is in-depth, authoritative, pastor-teacher instruction to believers in Bible doctrine categories. He does not know the categories of Bible doctrine. He cannot possibly talk to you on any intelligent basis on a doctrine like justification; propitiation; salvation; redemption; or, the blood of Christ.

So, the result is that we have in the local church today congregations who actually have been trained to accept mediocrity in spiritual things. They've been trained to accept it from the pulpit, and they've been trained to accept it in their own Christian life, consequently, because the congregation is not going to have a chance to go anywhere beyond the quality that is found in the pulpit itself.

So, what do we have? We have local churches that are functioning on football-game, emotional motivations. They have no content to guide their souls. They just have a bunch of emotional motivations. There's a church in town here that has a sign up. This particular church sign this week says, "Even a mosquito doesn't get slapped on the back until he goes to work." Doesn't that tell you a lot about the human viewpoint gimmickry that is going on in that particular place in order to get people to serve the Lord? How are you going to serve the Lord? By getting a pat on the back. Nothing could be a grosser demonstration of what goes on in local churches today than the appeal to the old sin nature in order to get Christians to somehow do something nice for the Lord, and to be sure that Christians are all credited and recognized, and that they are praised sufficiently, and patted on the back, so that they'll do what they should do.

This is not an accident. This is a deliberate plan of the mentality of Satan to undermine what the local church ministry is all about. The average Christian demonstrates what the local church ministry is all about by the fact that most of them leave their Bibles at home when they go to church on Sunday, and they leave their brains at home along with it. They do not come to church expecting to be fed on the Word of God in substance. Instead, people are willing to feed on the grossest kind of spiritual chaff trap that is pure appeal to the old sin nature. The pulpits give it out, and the preachers get away with it. The poor people of God, and the sheep without shepherds, go on to spiritual malnutrition year-after-year.

The pastors are at fault for substituting programs and techniques of emotional stimulation for real instruction in Bible doctrine. They call it love, and they call it a blessing of the Holy Spirit. And what they're giving people is kicks to their old sin nature. And the sad part about it is that the sheep don't know what's being done to them. Sheep inherently are dumb, and they're fed bad food, and they're treated deceitfully, and they don't realize it.

So, instead of learning to think through the great doctrines of the faith, what we are teaching Christians is how to clap and beat with some religious hoedown; how to get all excited over the strings of a strumming guitar; and, how to share your experiences with one another so that the life of the body can supposedly be advanced.

**Seminaries Today**

This week I found an interesting little article in a publication called the "Evangelical Newsweek," April 22nd, 1977 issue. I'd like to read you an article entitled "Few Seminaries Do Serious Theology:" "'Although seminaries today are thriving, few are creating a genuine respect for theology,' claims Fuller Professor James Dane in 'The Christian Century,' February 2-9. 'Seminarians must be given an authentic theology – one that can indeed be an influence upon the pulpit and the whole life of the church. A theology that cannot be preached is worthless – surely not worth the students' costly tuition. Much theology in both liberal and conservative seminaries is abstract and un-preachable.'

"According to Dane, today's theological inadequacy is reflected in the 'current hand-holding; heart-baring; soul-sharing; happiness-oriented; relational; interpersonal piety that so largely characterizes Christians' spirituality in the present decade.' In this non-theological, anti-intellectual climate, we must make a conscious and deliberate attempt to create an authentic theological mind shaped by genuine theological concerns.'"

I think that that's well put. What the professor is saying is that seminaries are the first people who are at fault. They are not teaching young men that theology is the heart of the system, and that being expository preachers who explain theological categories is the name of the game. And so they send them out with all kinds of counseling concepts, and techniques, and procedures, and church operation gimmickries. And they do not focus their attention, or equip them from the original language, to be expositors of doctrinal categories. The result, he says is that people in the pews have to say, "Well, let's see, I have to express my Christianity. I can't express it toward God and in my relationships with Him because I don't know what those relationships are.

So, I'll just do it with some externalisms. I'll get to the group, and we'll clap our hands to: "Do Lord, Oh do Lord, ..." Then we'll get somebody strumming the guitar to keep us moving along. Then we'll get together, and we'll put arms around each other, and we'll sway as we sing back and forth. Then we will share with one another our soul's experience. We'll ask each other to pray for our no-good husbands, and our sneaky wives, and our low-down kids, and all the other things we suffer from for the Lord.

Who are you kidding? Those are sheep have stomachs full of chaff, and they're sick. Anytime you get yourself into a group that's out with the old hand-holding, hard-bearing, soul-sharing, happiness-oriented, relational, interpersonal piety stuff, you're with a group of sheep that have been starved on the Word of God, and they are sick. And if you hang around with them, that's what you're going to get: sick.

**Christian Techniques Today**

"Eternity" magazine points up this same problem that we have within Christianity and local churches today in its last issue, the May, 1977 issue, where William J. Petersen, the editor of the magazine, has written this editorial entitled "Brainwashing: Them and Us.:" "Sometime in the mid-1960s, we printed an article called "Witnessing is Not Brainwashing" by John White. It was long before Ted Patrick and other de-programmers made headlines by kidnapping youngsters away from the cults. I must confess that I haven't always known what to say about Patrick and his ilk, but I too have resented the high-pressure tactics of these newer cults.

"But the other day, a news release came to my desk that jolted me. A 22-year-old monk had been kidnapped from an Oklahoma monastery because his parents charged that he had been brainwashed by the Roman Catholic Church, and needed deprogramming. I wonder who's next: Young Life; Youth for Christ; or, how about your own church?

"That's when I went back to reread John White's article. He referred to communist techniques of brainwashing: incessant repetition; psychological manipulation of the subject by alternately berating and comforting him; making the subject laugh and then making him cry; working upon the subject when he is physically exhausted; and, using group pressure to channel reactions.

"I have to admit that I've been in many Christian gatherings where some of those forces have been operating. In fact, as White said in his article, every conversion is partly psychological. Sometimes you see elements of physical exhaustion at work on the subjects in youth retreats, or even Bill Gothard seminars. You see elements of group pressures at Billy Graham rallies and other mass meetings. You see gifted ministers playing upon their listeners' emotions by getting them to laugh and cry until they are putty his hands. You see children' workers sometimes overdoing the use of rote techniques. I am not against using techniques in our Christian outreach. Whether you are a writer, or a preacher, or a neighborhood witness, you need to develop your gifts to be effective in your witness. But we must be aware that brainwashing only accomplishes human results. True conversion and true spiritual behavior modification is a result of the working of the Holy Spirit. And we must be aware that brainwashing is not just what the other guys do."

I think that that's well put, because it puts its finger again on the substitute which has been instituted in the local church for real knowledge of the Word of God. Instead of the preacher occupying himself with study and teaching, he's occupying himself with these psychological techniques. And you should be aware of them. When you find yourself in a church service where the preacher is making you laugh, and then he's making you feel a little sad, to where you maybe drop a tear or two, and then he's swinging you back to laughter, you just understand that this is a technique which is used to get you to the point where you are ready to sway with anything he says, and any direction that he indicates. And he is indeed making you putty in his hands. And when you find yourself under the pressures of the group, and when you find yourselves under all of these techniques that cause you to do something from an old-sin-nature, external frame of reference, just recognize it as being manipulation. Just recognize it as being a con game that is being exercised on you.

The sad part about all of this is that this represents the huge majority of local church operations today. And Christians, like dumb sheep, tolerate it. The grossest example, of course, of this substitution of the conning technique for a biblical frame of reference is the charismatic fraud, with its blatant emotional zeal without knowledge. They are the epitome of this fraud of emotional zeal without a biblical basis. If they ever got to teaching the Word of God in terms of what the Word of God really said, the whole movement would collapse. They must protect themselves from any in-depth exposition of the Word of God, or the movement would be revealed to be the fraud of Satan that it really is.

Yet, Christians will put pressure on the pastors, interestingly enough, who want to study hard, and who want to teach with quality and substance. You wouldn't believe the pressures that are put on a pastor who wants to do the job the way the Word of God lays it out for him to do: feed the flock. That doesn't mean to starve them, or to give them chaff, but feed them real, substantial categories of doctrinal viewpoint. That kind of pastor is often urge to try to be more popular in his style in the public services, and to keep the heavy stuff for small groups, which again expresses that general attitude that Christians should be kept in the dark; that they should not be given anything that is substantial spiritual food; and, that they should be viewed as simply pawns to be manipulated within the local church ministry, and in the so-called work of the Lord.

Well, the sad thing is that Christians don't know how uninformed they really are about the mind of God. They are indeed sheep without shepherds, as the Lord called them, and it made Him weep for them, and it makes us weep for them. They are sheep without a shepherd, and they don't even know that they're milling about. What a waste of the fact that God has communicated from His side to our side. What a waste!

The lack of spiritual IQ that we're talking about is nowhere more amply revealed than in the habit of taking new converts and making them superstars in the Christian life, and calling upon them for pronouncements on Christian principles, and listening to them when they speak.

**Charles Colson**

Watergate is before us once more with a new series of television programs with former President Nixon. One of the key people in the Watergate manipulation was a man named Charles Colson. Colson was probably the most feared man in all of Nixon's administration. He was at the heart of everything that was being done in that government. By the grace of God, Colson, who had to serve a prison term for his activities in the Watergate affair, has professed salvation in Jesus Christ. And we have no reason to doubt that he has had a genuine new birth.

**Capital Punishment**

"Eternity" magazine, May, 1977 issue, has an article (a small write-up) on Colson's opinion on capital punishment, and I'd like to read it to you. Here's a person who has just become a Christian. Here's a person who was active in government that required a term in prison to pay for his part. Let's take a look at the matter of judgment. Here was a person who was part of a crew who was involved in a conspiracy, and they made tapes about what they were doing. That's smart, isn't it? They involved in a conspiracy, and they make tapes about what they're doing. Here's a man who was part of a group who said, "Let's keep the tapes," after they discovered that the cat was out of the bag. Instead of having a tape-burning ceremony, their just said, "Let's save the tapes. Maybe a committee would want to subpoena them in order to send us to prison." Now, that's smart!

OK, now here we have a man who is involved with that kind of great discernment and great judgment all along the line. And now he has become a Christian. He has operated on that human viewpoint and so they ask him for an opinion on capital punishment. I want to read it to you. You people know about capital punishment. You know it from the biblical frame of reference. You're going to be perfectly capable of getting a beautiful example here of this stuff that we're plagued with in the local-church superstars in the Christian life. Here is somebody particularly who is just brand new, and he has something to pronounce. Here's what he says on capital punishment:

"I'm opposed to capital punishment." Bingo! He struck out right off the bat. Continuing:

"As a Christian, there is no way that I can read the beatitudes of the great commandments of Christ and believe that man has any right to take a human life. When Christ says, 'Resist not evil,' it seems to me that I am enjoined from supporting capital punishment, which is society's maximum retribution. Saying this, I do recognize the fallen structures of society do not live by Christ's commands. As a political conservative, I am also opposed to it. I do not believe in giving to the state the power to take human life. The government has too much power over our lives as it is. The notion that the state can take a life can lead to the ultimate tyranny. If you think about it, there is really a very short step between Gary Gilmore and Hitler's genocide of the Jews. If one life must be taken to protect society, who's to say that six million lives need not also be taken?"

I hope you're getting all of this human-viewpoint disorientation. It's just pouring out in every sentence, practically, here.

"My prison experiences also teach me that, as good as our criminal justice system is, it still makes mistakes, and once society has taken the life of a convicted offender, there's no way to undo it if we should wrong – and we might well be. The great jurist, Lernard Hann, quoted from Oliver Cromwell in the book entitled Morals and Public Life: 'I beseech thee in the bowels of Christ. Think that ye may be mistaken.'

"Finally, I do not think that capital punishment is any deterrent. I visited a man on death row in Idaho. He had committed several murders while under the influence of narcotics. He was out of his mind, so the thought of death was no deterrent. By definition, it never is a deterrent, of course, in a crime of passion.

"And recently in Idaho, a hit man was sentenced to die by hanging. He had taken $5,000 to kill a man's wife. He knew the consequences, but the price was right.

"In conclusion, when we sanction official killing, how can we preach the inhumanity of killing? The state does it because it has the power to enact the law, but can we argue that the law makes it morally right? I think not. If we want to teach others, killing, no matter that it is sanctioned by man's law, is a wrong example. I wonder how many people were subconsciously encouraged to violence by watching the horrid spectacle of the Gilmore execution. Capital punishment is acknowledgment that man cannot be changed. As a Christian, I must believe that any man can be changed by God. Society has no right to deny God that opportunity."

The fantastic thing about this is that, all the way through that statement, I'm sure you realize that God has spoken on this subject, and Colson is completely oblivious that God has said anything. He has given a series of typical human viewpoint arguments against capital punishment. And the saddest part about all this is that there are going to now be literally millions of stupid Christians who will listen to a superstar like Colson. And what he has said on capital punishment, perhaps, could not be more distorted, and more out-of-keeping with divine viewpoint, and yet they will believe him.

Just to show you how out of line Colson's remarks are, I do want to read to you a couple of paragraphs on this subject of capital punishment, which "Eternity" magazine also published in that issue. The writer here of this article on Capital Punishment says, "Again, I quote Gordon H. Clark, as he writes in Baker's Dictionary of Christian Ethics: 'Contemporary efforts to abolish capital punishment proceed on a non-Christian view of man; a secular theory of criminal law; and, a low estimate of the value of life. Justice must be taken seriously.' That is well put. The abolitionists (that is, those who want to get rid of capital punishment) would challenge Clarke's assertion. They too take Scripture seriously, but would cite passages which emphasize life and forgiveness rather than death and condemnation. For example ..."

Now, these are the people who are supporting Colson's view, and encouraging him to make pronouncements such as he made. And here are the verses that these people quote to demonstrate that capital punishment is wrong. For example, verses like: "Judge not, and you will not be judged. Condemned not, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven" (Luke 6:37).

I'm sure there are a lot of people on death row right now that say, "Hey, that is for me, man. I like that. 'Judge not, man.' Just because I killed somebody, you will judge me. You might get killed. Don't condemn me just because I stole this money from the bank. Don't condemn me. The Bible says that you're not to condemn me. Just forgive me." Where does this lead to? What kind of insanity are we talking about? Are these people crazy, or what? These are Christians. ... And they're using the Word of God in this way?

Here is another verse that they present for their position: "Repay no one evil for evil. Never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine. I will repay,' says the Lord" (Romans 12:17-19). This is used to stress that man is forbidden to play God, and judge the destiny of another person. Yet, the Word of God has done exactly what they say it does not do. The Word of God has told us to judge their destiny. The Word of God has given us very specific guidelines where society is to pass judgment, including the taking of a life:

"Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed. For God made man in his own image" (Genesis 9:6). This verse supports previous arguments that, since life is so sacred, the death penalty administered by man is the only appropriate punishment. This authorization was given by God to Noah. It has never been rescinded. It is God's standard policy relative to murder-one.

Romans 13:2-4: "Therefore, he who resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of him who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval. For he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid. For He does not bear the sword in vain. He is the servant of God to execute His wrath on the wrongdoer."

The book of Romans makes it very clear that capital punishment (the bearing of the sword – the taking of life) has been given to the state in order to protect society in the era of the angelic warfare. Yet, we have the anti-capital punishment people quoting Scripture as if God was contradictory of Himself. <>p> Dr. C. C. Ryrie probably speaks for most retentionists when he says, "Romans 13:4 does teach the right of government to take the life of a criminal, although in what cases is not specified. The prerogative of capital punishment established in Genesis 9:6, elaborated in the Mosaic Code, not done away with in the teachings of Jesus, is affirmed in the doctrinal portions of the New Testament."

Other passages of the anti-capital punishment people: "The biblical evidence leads them to come to the opposite conclusion. Commandments which prohibit killing (murder) (Exodus 20:13). This is applicable to individuals and the state. Life is sacred (Genesis 1:26:27). No one except God has the right to take it away. 'As I live, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live' (Ezekiel 18:23)." And so on.

I think you get the picture. This is the ridiculous scene of Christians. We're not reading from unbelievers here. We're not reading from some disoriented lawyer who is operating on a secular view of criminal law concept. We're talking about Christians. And here they are, giving us what? They are giving us this kind of human viewpoint concerning a matter like capital punishment. They are putting up superstars who just came into the Christian life as if they had something to say, and something to pronounce about the Word of God. I'll wager that Colson has had associations with some of the greatest religious leaders of this nation. And I'll wager that not a single one of them said, "Now, Charlie, I want to give you some advice as you start your Christian life. Keep your mouth shut for several years, will you? Don't let somebody come along and say, 'Hey, Mr. Colson, we'd like to have an interview from you.' Don't let somebody come along and say, 'Colson, how about writing a book?' Don't let somebody come along and put you on a television program so that you can give your testimony for Jesus. Just spend a few years, and keep your mouth shut.

Do you think any of our great religious leaders had the insight or the kindness to tell Colson that? Somehow, by the grace of God, he may get hold of Berean tapes, perhaps, and get enlightenment on the Word of God. ... If he gets enlightenment on the Word of God, he's going to look back on this article, and he's going to be humiliated. He's going to be embarrassed. And then he's going to be grieved in his heart as he thinks of how many people he has led astray by this human viewpoint statement he made here, when spiritual leaders did not hold their hands out and restrain him, and give him guidance, and say, "Keep your mouth shut."

**The Apostle Paul**

I think it's rather interesting when we look into the Word of God, we find the apostle Paul, who was a great leader among the Jewish people; a great student of the Scriptures; a very knowledgeable man; and, extremely educated on just the secular realm itself, as well as the religious realm. And suddenly, he becomes a Christian. If there ever was a superstar in the religious world, it was the apostle Paul. No one has ever equated him when it comes to being a superstar.

Yet, I want to read to you Galatians 1:15-18, where Paul says, "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the gentiles, *immediately* I conferred not with flesh and blood, neither did I go up to Jerusalem to them who were apostles before me." He didn't go to the center of Christianity (Jerusalem), where (in today's world) they could have put him on television. They could have had public pronouncements from the forums from this new marvelous man who had just been born-again. He was a superstar in Judaism who has come over to Christianity: "Neither did I go up to Jerusalem to them who were apostles before me. But I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then, after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him 15 days."

Charles Colson makes pronouncements about such an in-depth spiritual subject like capital punishment, which requires real, clear-cut Bible doctrine understanding to say anything about it. He makes pronouncements on it shortly after being born again, but the apostle Paul, who knew the Bible (the Old Testament) backwards and forwards, goes out into Arabia and keeps his mouth shut for three years and then some. Isn't that interesting?

So, how disoriented are we? And in heaven's name, what's happened to spiritual leadership in the United States (those who are the big names that everybody knows), when real spiritual leadership in this country now lies with a handful of nobodies whose name no one knows, but who God is using to give orientation to anybody who is ready to listen? That's pathetic, and that's sad, and that is indeed something to weep about.

Preachers really have something to be proud of in the abysmal ignorance of the American Christian community today. They really have something to be proud of. I think that gives you the picture of where we stand in the local church today.

So, we come to Berean Memorial church and what are we doing? We're explaining to people the doctrine of justification. We tell fathers to go home and talk to their kids about justification; and, mothers to ask their children questions about justification. We put it in a systematic summary so that they can learn the whole picture. We talk about the doctrine of redemption. We go to the Greek language, and we tell them that here all these different words, and here are what they tell us about redemption: payment, out of the market; and, freed from the market. And we expect people to be able to explain this. We talk about propitiation – the wrath of God being appeased. The average Christian couldn't explain to you what justification was if his life depended upon it. He doesn't know the first thing about redemption, except in some kind of hazy, far-off way. He couldn't pronounce the word "propitiation," let alone explain it.

Here the apostle Paul has led us to the Mount Everest of Scripture – these verses right here. And he slams in one magnificent doctrine after another to try to explain the grace salvation that has been provided. And do Christians understand it? And now we come to another subject that is really a hotbed of ignorance.

**The Blood of Jesus Christ**

That is the next thing that Paul refers to here: the blood of Christ – the blood of Jesus Christ: "Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood." The word "through," in Romans 3:25 is this Greek word "dia." "Dia" indicates the means, and the means is "pistis" (faith). This word that we have already learned means trust. Faith unto salvation is in the person of Jesus Christ. It is not faith in the blood of Christ. It is faith in the person of Jesus Christ that constitutes salvation. The benefits of propitiation are secured through faith in Christ. That is what this passage is telling us.

Now, the means of propitiation, we are told, is "in His blood." The word "in" is the Greek word "en," and it means "by means of." We have propitiation by means of His (Jesus Christ's) blood. And here is the word: "His 'haima')." This refers to the literal blood of Jesus Christ. We connect by means of His blood with the word "propitiation." We don't connected with the word "faith." In other words, we translate it: "To be a propitiation by means of His blood through faith." This is rather than as our King James Version translates it. Connect the idea of "by means of His blood" with "propitiation." Propitiation comes by means of His blood. Salvation (the benefits of that propitiation) comes through faith in Jesus Christ.

So, this morning we're going to begin a study of the subject of the blood of Christ. Over the centuries, many battles have raged around this subject. During the 1920s, it came to a climax in the battles between the liberals and the conservatives over this idea of the blood of Jesus Christ.

**Blood**

Looking back into the Old Testament, let's take a look at the use of the concept of blood. I'm talking about the literal stuff that flows in the veins of animals and human beings. Blood was viewed in the Old Testament as the basis of life in both humans and animals. In Genesis 9:4, we read, "But flesh, with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, you shall not eat." People were forbidden to eat anything made of blood. They were forbidden to eat anything which had the blood in it; that is, that the animal had not been killed in such a way that the blood basically drained out. You could not eat something that was strangled. The blood had a very sacred meaning to God – both animal and human blood. Therefore, it was not to be consumed because life belongs to God, and to God alone. And that's true whether it's of animals or it's of people. Therefore, only God has the right to deal with the disposition of life. And blood, being the basis of life was never to be eaten.

Leviticus 17:11, says, "For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I've given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls. For it is the blood that makes an atonement for the soul." Verse 14 says, "For it is the life of all flesh, the blood of it, for is for the life thereof. Therefore, I said, unto the children of Israel. You shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh, for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof. Whoever eats of it shall be cut off." You may add to that Deuteronomy 12:23.

As you all know, the Old Testament was filled with animal sacrifices. The whole Mosaic system was built upon the sacrifices of animals whose blood was actually shed. The Old Testament animal sacrifices portrayed the future death of Christ on the cross for the sins of the world. The death of animals for sin portrayed the giving of a life in death. When a lamb had its throat cut, or a bull had its throat cut, and the blood gushed out, that blood was signifying the giving of a life in death for some purpose.

So, the death of an animal for the sins of the offerer portrayed the giving of a life in death. The live lamb scampering around the yard had no effect on the Israelites' sin. When the Jews were told, in the first Passover feast, to prepare for the death angel to move through their community, they were told to take a male lamb without blemish and in perfect condition, and to kill the lamb, and to kill it by shedding its blood, and take the blood and rub it on the door posts. Some Jewish gentlemen could have said, "I hate to waste the money on a lamb. We've got some leftover food from yesterday. We can use that for the Passover feast. We'll just use this lamb as our lamb for the Passover. But we won't kill him. We just keep him penned up here as our special lamb. That lamb would not have prevented the death angel from going into that home and killing the firstborn. The only way that lamb was any good was when its throat was cut; the blood gushed out; and, the blood was put on the door post and on the lintel. Only that way is the blood of any value.

So, only a lamb given in sacrifice will provide a covering for the sins of the Israelites. An innocent life given in payment for a guilty one is what was taking place. The shedding of the animal's blood forcibly demonstrated that a life had been given in death. When they saw that life just literally pumping violently out of the throat of that animal, they knew that a life was being given. They understood that blood was the base of life. When they saw that blood pouring out, they knew that the life was being given. The punishment of death, which should have come upon the sinning Jew, was thereby inflicted upon the innocent animal substitute.

The Old Testament sacrificial animal always had to be killed by the method where its blood would be shed. It was not enough to take that animal and strangle him to death, and then skin him, and prepare him as a lamb, and do everything else they were supposed to. Had they strangled that animal; had they drowned the animal; or, had they poisoned him in some way to kill him, it would not have been acceptable as a sacrifice for covering of sin. Now, get that. There was only one way: literal actual blood had to be shed. Therefore, for the animal to be a sacrifice, he had to be killed, and the only way a sacrifice can be killed is by a method that causes its blood to pour out of the body. It's not enough that he should just simply be killed. The whole idea of sacrifice requires the literal shedding of blood. That's the life base. That's what must be shed. There is no forgiveness of sins possible, the Bible says without the actual shedding of literal blood. Hebrews 9:22 and Hebrews 11:4: This is the basis of the whole system.

Hebrews 9:22: "And almost all things are by the Law purged with blood, and without shedding of blood is no remission (or no forgiveness)."

Hebrews 11:4: "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 spoke." I heard a seminary student one time, in an adult class here, contending that Cain's sin was not simply that he brought vegetables and fruits to God for a sacrifice, thus lacking the blood that his brother Abel brought. But it was some other reason. Well, he didn't understand his theology. No more ignorant statement could be made. The Bible is very clear that without the actual shedding of an animal's blood in the Old Testament, and the pre-Mosaic systems, there could not have been any forgiveness of sins whatsoever.

Furthermore, it could not have been just a mere donation of blood. You could not have just said, "Well, I don't want to kill the animal, but I am going to cut an artery, and I'm going to take a little bit of blood, and we'll put a tourniquet on it, and we'll stop the bleeding, and we'll save the animal, and we'll have the blood. I know some of you already thought about that. You're economical. And that would not have been a sacrifice. The literal blood had to be poor to the extent of death. Only that constituted a genuine sacrifice.

In Leviticus 1:11, we read, "And he shall kill it;" that is the animal: "He shall kill it on the side of the altar northward before the Lord, and the priests (Aaron's sons) shall sprinkle its blood round about upon the altar." The animal had to be killed, and it had to be killed by a method which would secure its blood for use in the sacrifice.

In Leviticus 1:15, we see where a bird is used in sacrifice: "And the priest shall bring it unto the altar, and wring off its head, and burn it on the altar, and the blood there shall be wrung out at the side of the altar. In the case of a bird, it too had to actually be killed in such a way that the literal blood flowed.

The blood of this sacrificial animal was given to God to atone for sins. The mere killing of the animal by the shedding of its blood, in fact, was not enough in itself. We better point that out. You might have gone through all the ritual: you might have had the perfect lamb; you might have investigated; you might have kept him penned up and watched him; and, you might have said, "He's not blind; he's not deaf; all of his bones are intact; there are no growths on him anywhere; and, he's a perfect animal. You might have taken him, and you might have gone through the proper ritual: the throat is cut; the jugular vein is broken; and, the blood gushes out. Now you might say, "I've offered the sacrifice for sins." No, you haven't. An animal has died under a proper sacrificial condition. But remember that in the Old Testament, until the blood was taken, and actually offered to God, it didn't count. It had to be applied someplace. And at the point of its application, that's when God says, "Your sins have been covered."

So, we have the blood being poured out at the base of the altar. Leviticus 8:15: "And he slew it, and Moses took the blood and put it on the horns of the altar roundabout with his finger, and purified the altar, and poured the blood at the bottom of the altar, and sanctified it to make reconciliation upon it."

Then, in the book of Exodus, the blood is smeared on the horns of the altar. Exodus 29:12: "And you shall take of the blood of the bullock, and put it upon the horns of the altar with your finger, and pour all the blood beside the bottom of the altar."

We have it being sprinkled on the altar in Exodus 29:16 and Leviticus 3:2. We have it being placed on the high priest in Exodus 29:21. We have it being sprinkled on the temple veil in Leviticus 4:6 and Numbers 19:4). For the purging of sin did not come at the shedding of the animal's blood, but at the point of its application.

Hebrews 9:19-22: "For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the Law, he took the blood of calves and of goats with water, and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people, saying, "This is the blood of the testament which God has enjoined unto you. Moreover, he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry, and almost all things are by the Law purged with blood, and without shedding of blood is no remission.

So, here's what this Old Testament system of animal sacrifices and the shedding of little blood was telling us. It was designed to propitiate God's wrath against sin, and that's what it did on a temporary basis in the Old Testament. It was designed to cancel or to expiate the moral guilt of the sinner. And that's what it did on credit. It was designed to provide a vicarious punishment for the sin of the offender upon a substitute. And that's what it did also. Instead of the person dying, the animal died. And it was designed to secure a pardon for sin for the offender, and to restore that person to fellowship with God. And that's what it did.

However, the Old Testament sacrifices were only a temporary covering for the sin. The animal sacrifices, Hebrews 10:4 tells us, could never remove the guilt of sin: "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." God was actually passing over the punishment for sin temporarily in anticipation of His Lamb, the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ.

Romans 3:25: "Whom God had set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are passed through the forbearance of God" (Hebrews 9:15, Hebrews 9:26). So, the concept of shedding blood and sacrifice cannot be equated simply with death. You can't just have an animal die. You must actually have him shed blood.

This whole ritual was pointed out beautifully in the great day of atonement, which we have summarized in Leviticus 16:30: "For on that day, the priests shall make an atonement for you to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the Lord.

Leviticus 23:27: "And on the tenth day of this seventh month, there shall be a day of atonement. It shall be a holy convocation among you, and you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord." This is the single most important day in the Hebrew calendar. It's called Yom Kippur. It is the great day of atonement. Only on that day, once a year, the high priests went into the holy-of-holies part of the tabernacle, there to atone for the sins of the people for one year. He went in there and atoned, first of all, for his own sins, by a bullock that he had given in sacrifice outside at the altar, of which he had taken the blood in. Then he took two goats, and he offered one goat in the proper sacrificial way; shed the blood; took the blood; went back inside there into the holy of holies; and, sprinkled it on the mercy seat (that place of propitiation), and God's wrath was diverted from the nation of Israel for one more year.

Then they went outside; he put his hands upon the other (live) goat; he pronounced the sins of the people; and, then he drove the goat (called the "scapegoat") out into the wilderness to disappear, symbolizing God's taking their sins away from them forever.

All of this was temporary. All this was picture. All this meant something. The reason I go over this is because in the next session, we're going to say, "So, now what does this mean relative to the blood of Christ?" You begin by looking at God's portrayals in the Old Testament. And after you get that picture clear (and how all of that worked), then you're in a position to go back and start looking at the blood of Jesus Christ.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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