

Light From the Old Testament on the Blood of Christ

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The Bible speaks much of blood. A clear understanding of its teaching on the matter is essential for sound soteriology; since God has set forth Christ to “to be a propitiation through faith in His blood” (Rom 3:25), and this blood is connected to atonement, reconciliation, sanctification, redemption and handfuls of other soul-saving doctrines, deviance from the Biblical teaching on the blood has eternal consequences of comparable horror to the joys received through correct understanding and appropriation of its blessings. With divergent views on the blood infiltrating fundamental Baptist churches, the fundamental movement and the greater evangelical world, a Scriptural understanding and contention for this glorious truth is all the more essential. Such a Scriptural understanding must evaluate the Old Testament data and consider their influence upon the New Testament teaching.

There are some instances where “blood” in the Old Testament refers specifically to literal blood (2 Sa 20:12, 1 Ki 18:28, 21:19, 22:35, 38, 2 Ki 3:22, 23, 9:33, Job 39:30) without any particular connection to sacrifice or death, the two areas with which it is predominantly connected.¹ Apart from the sacrificial system, blood appears in association with death in various ways. Genesis 4:10, the first mention of “blood” in the Bible, refers to the blood of Abel, who has just been murdered by his brother Cain. The death of a man from a fall from a parapet brings “blood upon [one’s] house” (De 22:8). The infliction of the death penalty for various crimes is said to bring blood upon one’s self:

¹ Extensive analysis of the Biblical teaching on the blood is attached as an appendix with this paper. It includes, for example, an analysis of large portions of the uses of the Hebrew word for blood in the Old Testament, as well as all the references to the words in the Old and New Testament which relate to the shedding of blood, all the instances where the Hebrew and Greek words for blood appear in the Bible, etc. An exegetical theology of the blood can be reasonably constructed through the examination and evaluation of the listed passages and their context. To approach the matter in this fashion will, as illumined by the Holy Spirit, produce the true Biblical position; examination of the writings of others, while helpful, can also lead astray if not firmly grounded in personal study of the revealed evidence.

For every one that curseth his father or his mother shall be surely put to death: he hath cursed his father or his mother; his blood shall be upon him. (Leviticus 20:9)

If a man also lie with mankind, as helieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them (Leviticus 20:13)

An man also that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone him with stones: their blood shall be upon them. (Leviticus 20:27)

While in instances such as these “blood upon them” speaks of death, the death is of such a kind that it involves the loss of physical blood. One who revenges a murder is termed the avenger of blood: “Or [if one] in enmity smite him with his hand, that he die: he that smote him shall surely be put to death; for he is a murderer: the revenger of blood shall slay the murderer, when he meeteth him” (Numbers 35:21, cf 35:24, 25, 27, Jos 20:3, 5, 9, etc.). To kill a man who is not guilty is to sin against innocent blood: “For he did put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine, and the LORD wrought a great salvation for all Israel: thou sawest it, and didst rejoice: wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause?” (1 Samuel 19:5). To bring about one’s own death is to have one’s blood upon his head: “And David said unto him, Thy blood be upon thy head; for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, ‘I have slain the LORD’s anointed.’... [for he had] called one of the young men, and said, ‘God near, and fall upon him.’ And he smote him that he died.” (2 Samuel 1:16, 15). A murderous man is a “bloody man” (2 Sam 16:7, 8), a murderous lineage a “bloody house” (2 Sam 21:1). God avenges His people with blood: “And thou shalt smite the house of Ahab thy master, that I may avenge the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the LORD, at the hand of Jezebel.” (2 Kings 9:7). The servants of king Joash “conspired against him for the blood of the sons of Jehoiada the priest, and slew him on his bed, and he died” (2 Chronicles 25:25).

References in the Old Testament to the “shedding of blood” are very often associated with violent death as well— the phrase is never used, however, of death, though unnatural, that does not involve the actual loss of physical blood (cf. 2 Ki 8:15). It is thus improper to consider “violent death” the dynamic equivalent to the shedding of blood. The Hebrew verb *shafach*² appears commonly as “shedding” (Gen 37:22) and “pouring” (Le 4:7) of blood, as well as in various contexts unrelated to blood. Representative uses of the word apart from blood include:

“And he shall cause the house to be scraped within round about, and they shall *pour out* the dust that they scrape off without the city into an unclean place.” (Leviticus 14:41)

“And the angel of God said unto him, ‘Take the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and lay them upon this rock, and *pour out* the broth.’ And he did so.” (Judges 6:20)

“And Hannah answered and said, ‘No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have *poured out* my soul before the LORD.” (1 Samuel 1:15).

“But Amasa took no heed to the sword that was in Joab’s hand: so he smote him therewith in the fifth rib, and *shed out* his bowels to the ground, and struck him not again; and he died.” (2 Samuel 20:10)

“And they came and besieged him in Abel of Bethmaachah, and they *cast up* a bank against the city, and it stood in the trench: and all the people that were with Joab battered the wall, to throw it down.” (2 Samuel 20:15)

“The LORD hath accomplished his fury; he *hath poured out* his fierce anger, and hath kindled a fire in Zion, and it hath devoured the foundations thereof.” (Lamentations 4:11)

The most common single use of the word, however, deals with the shedding or pouring out of blood. It can refer to bloody death either in context of death apart from sacrifice. Its’ first mention is in a non-sacrificial context: “Whoso *sheddeth* man’s blood, by man *shall* his blood *be shed* for in the image of God made him man.” (Genesis 9:6). It often appears in relation to offerings under the Law: “And thou shalt take of the blood of the

² Pg. 1049-1050 in the *Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English lexicon*. Also Strong’s #8210.

bullock, and put it upon the horns of the altar with thy finger, and *pour* all the blood beside the bottom of the altar.” (Exodus 29:12). Blood that was in slain animals was also “poured out,” using this verb, before it could be eaten (De 12:16, 24). Despite the fact that the shedding or pouring out of blood in the Bible is never assigned to an act which clearly involved non-bloody death, some could use the generality of a verse such as Genesis 9:6 to argue that the “shedding of blood” simply referred to death without the necessity of the involvement of physical blood. However, 1 Kings 18:28 uses the verb to refer to the shedding or loss of blood without physical death: “And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood *gushed out* upon them.” This conclusively demonstrates that “shedding of blood” deals with literal blood which is literally poured out, an act which commonly goes hand in hand with death Biblically, but does not necessarily do so. “Violent death” is not a Biblical synonym for “shedding of blood.” The Old Testament use of the phrase carries over into NT usage; the Greek verbal equivalent (Joel 2:28, Acts 2:17), *ekchuno* (εκχυνω), appears in contexts unrelated to the shedding of blood (“the wine *runneth out*,” Mt 9:17; “all his bowels *gushed out*,” Ac 1:18; “on the Gentiles also *was poured out* the gift of the Holy Ghost,” Ac 10:45, “the love of God *is shed abroad* in our hearts,” Rom 5:5), in relation to non-sacrificial death (“when the blood of thy martyr Stephen *was shed*,” Ac 22:20, cf. Rom 3:15, Rev 16:6), and alongside sacrificial death: “For this is my blood of the new testament, which *is shed* for many for the remission of sins.” (Matthew 26:28, cf. Mark 14:24, Lu 22:20). As in the Old Testament, it is not a re-naming for violent death, but is a separate act, the literal pouring out or shedding of physical blood. Hebrews 9:22 combines³ the word for blood (*haima*, αιμα) with *ekchuno* to form a word that appears only in that verse in the New Testament, *haimatekchusia*,⁴ “blood-shedding.” The truth that “without shedding of blood [there] is no remission” consequently refers to an act of

³ See *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, entry on αιματεκχυσια with its derivation.

⁴ Related expressions which deal with the pouring out of blood appear in the LXX. See *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament*, entry on Hebrews 9:22.

physical blood-shedding on Christ's part distinct from His death which was necessary for the forgiveness of sin.

The typical Old Testament sacrifices provide extensive further evidence for a distinction between death and blood in relation to the remission of sin. "For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." (Leviticus 17:11). The first reference to blood in the verse must deal with literal, physical blood—a metaphoric reference to life is impossible, since life is stated to be "in" the blood. Obviously blood cannot here refer to death; "the life of the flesh is in the death" is absurd. Consequently, the "it" (17:11b) that is given upon the altar and atones is literal, physical blood. The doctrine of physical blood atonement is restated in 17:11c. It is seen plainly both within and outside of the books of Moses:

And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year with the blood of the sin offerings of atonements: once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations: it is most holy unto the LORD. (Exodus 30:10)

And the priests killed them, and they made reconciliation with their blood upon the altar, to make an atonement for all Israel: for the king commanded that the burnt offering and the sin offering should be made for all Israel. (2 Chronicles 29:24)

Atonement and reconciliation with God was not completed until blood was applied before God temporally subsequent to the death of the sacrificial animal: "And no sin offering, whereof any of the blood *is brought into the tabernacle of the congregation to reconcile withal in the holy place*, shall be eaten: it shall be burnt in the fire." (Leviticus 6:30). The sprinkling of blood, after the death of the sacrifice, wrought sanctification ("And Moses took of the anointing oil, and of the blood which was upon the altar, and sprinkled it upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon his sons' garments with him; and sanctified Aaron, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons' garments with him. Leviticus 8:30) and purification (Leviticus 14:7, 14, 17, 25, 28, etc.)

It is worthy of notice that, while death was necessary, the Scriptures speak only of the offering of blood (Exodus 34:25, Leviticus 7:33), not of the offering of death, to the Lord. The pattern, repeated many times in Scripture,⁵ involves the death of the sacrifice with the subsequent and necessary application of its blood:

And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him. And he shall kill the bullock before the LORD: and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. (Leviticus 1:4-5)

And he shall bring the bullock unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD; and he shall lay his hand upon the bullock's head, and kill the bullock before the LORD. And the priest that is anointed shall take of the bullock's blood, and bring it to the tabernacle of the congregation: and the priest shall dip his finger in the blood, and sprinkle of the blood seven times before the LORD, before the vail of the sanctuary. And the priest shall put some of the blood upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the LORD, which is in the tabernacle of the congregation; and shall pour all the blood of the bullock at the bottom of the altar of burnt offering, which is at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. (Leviticus 4:4-7)

And he killed it; and Moses sprinkled the blood upon the altar round about. (Leviticus 8:19)

Israel had such examples of substitutionary death followed by the application of blood repeated for her countless times in her daily and special sacrifices. Both elements were needed for the fulfillment of the legal commands, for covering sin, and for acceptable worship of God.

The first feast God ordained for Israel, the Passover, also demonstrates the divinely ordained role blood plays in redemption. Exodus twelve records the institution of the Passover; a "lamb... without blemish" (v. 5) is kept until the fourteenth day of the month, at which time "the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the

⁵ The research of the author of this paper, which is attached to it as an appendix, provides several pages of examples. Failure to follow this example brought reproof (Leviticus 10:18)—in the context of the death of Nadab and Abihu for their offering of "strange fire" (Leviticus 10).

evening. And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it... And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I 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” (v. 6-7, 13). The divine pattern was ordained, and executed:

Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, “Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the Passover. And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the bason, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the bason; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning. For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the LORD will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you.” (Exodus 12:21-23)

In this feast we note that both the death of the innocent lamb and the subsequent application of the blood were required for salvation from death; when God saw the blood, then He passed over the house— had an Israelite killed a lamb but not appropriated the blood for his protection, his firstborn would have died alongside that of the Egyptians. Some light on the relation of the blood to the death may be seen in Exodus 12:13, where the blood is termed a “token.” The Hebrew word here is primarily translated by a form of “sign” (60 times), while it appears as “token(s)” 14 times, as “ensign(s)” twice, “miracles” twice, and “mark” once. Its first appearance is in Genesis 1:14, “let them be for signs...” It also is used in relation to the sealing of covenants:

And God said, “This is the *token* of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generation: I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a *token* of a covenant between me and the earth...” And God said unto Noah, “This is the *token* of the covenant, which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth.” (Genesis 9:12, 13, 17)

And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a *token* of the covenant betwixt me and you. (Genesis 17:11)

The word is used as well to signify a “sign” of God’s promises and faithfulness, which testified that He would fulfill them (Ex 3:12, 31:13, 17, Josh 4:6, Jud 6:17, 1 Sam 2:34, 2 Ki 20:8-9, etc.). In relation to Exodus 12:13, we can see that the blood of the Passover lamb was a “token” or “sign” that God’s promise of salvation applied to those within the house. The blood applied to the house pointed back to the death and shedding of blood of the lamb, without which there would be no blood to apply; but without it, the death of the sacrifice would avail nothing. Applied blood demonstrated that the conditions of God for the deliverance had been satisfied, and the blood was a necessary sign and seal of the promise by which God had bound Himself to save; all who received the covenant seal would receive the fruits of God’s promises, and none without it had any part in it, though a sacrifice was available for them as for all. Furthermore, the blood applied provided a perpetual sign that the completed sacrifice had provided salvation.

In Christ, the great soteriological antitype for the deliverance wrought in the Passover lamb and other Mosaic sacrificial paradigms, the necessity of the application of blood appears as well. The Lord Jesus Christ shed His blood and died on the cross for all men (Hebrews 2:9); full, free, and complete remission of sins has thus been provided (Hebrews 9:22, 27-28) by His vicarious sacrifice. All are commanded to receive the benefits of His offering of Himself and be saved (Hebrews 12:25, Matthew 11:28-30, Revelation 22:17, etc.). In the Passover, only those who were actually found under the blood were spared (cf. Heb 11:28), and in the Mosaic covenant, only those sprinkled by the blood of the animals were cleansed (Heb 9:13)— so only those washed in the blood of Christ (Revelation 1:5) and redeemed by it (Revelation 5:9) to God are actually saved. Hebrews 9:14 is the declaration of the antitypical fulfillment of the former sacrifices detailed in the previous verse (9:13)— the Christ, once “offered”⁶ for all time, has incorruptible blood (1 Peter 1:18-19) which will still presently “purge” the one who

⁶ προσηνεγκεν, aorist indicative active— one time completed action.

comes to it for cleansing by faith (Rom 3:25), even as the ashes of the heifer, killed once, were preserved to sanctify each needy one that came to be sprinkled.

An examination of all the OT typology on the blood in relation to the NT fulfillment in Christ is a task beyond the scope of this paper. We have seen that the Old Testament maintains a distinction between the shedding of blood and violent death. The former, which refers to the pouring out of physical, literal blood, is needed for atonement. Furthermore, the offerings and sacrifices have demonstrated that a distinction exists in the remission of sins between death with the shedding of blood, and the application of that blood—the blood must be applied to the object cleansed before it can appropriate the benefit proffered in the sacrifice. These principles hold true in the antitype, Christ. It was necessary for Him both to die and shed His blood for the remission of sins. That blood was then antotypically sprinkled, and it is applied to the sinner as a sign and seal of the new covenant, to provide the perfect cleansing only foreshadowed in the Old Testament.

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OT teaching on what blood is.

Blood as a covenant seal

What blood is demonstrated in Passover

What blood is demonstrated in Day of Atonement

NT teaching seen in:

Origin of Christ's blood in the incarnation. Theanthropic blood (not only either human or Divine.) Traducianism/creationism

Lord's supper

Book of Hebrews. Fulfillment of Day of Atonement, with blood of Christ taken into heavenly holy of holies and sprinkled on the mercy seat as a sign and seal of the new covenant.

Revelation (in relation esp. to Heb 12:24)

Historic Christianity on the blood.

What JM believes on blood, and how it is heretical. Refute his ideas in parts above, although without using his name. Show how he speaks out of both sides of his mouth on the IFCA doctrinal statement as well.

DON'T LOSE THE NOTES I MADE!!!!