

## ***The Blood of Jesus (Part 2 of 2)***

In this bible study we will carry on looking at the blood of Jesus and what it means for us as Christians and I want to bring a couple of comparisons from Scripture.

Let's begin by reading Gen.4:1-11. Here we see the familiar story of Cain and Abel and Vs. three tells us, *'And the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering he had no regard.'* I want to start by looking at the offerings these two men offered, and what was different about the two offerings? There is a lot of dispute among Christians as to why God accepted Abel's offering but rejected Cain's, personally I think it centres on the nature of the offering, Cain is an arable farmer and offers an offering from *'the fruit of the land'* (Vs.3). However Abel, *'brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions'*, (Vs.4). It is my belief that the sacrificial system, and therefore the foreshadowing of Jesus was demonstrated to Adam and Eve after the fall, (read Gen. 3:21). believe that God showed Adam and Eve the cost of sin by killing an innocent animal in their presence and then demonstrated how that sacrifice would provided them with an adequate covering, or atonement. If this is so, then Cain's offering of "the fruit of the land", would have been an offence to God while Abel followed the prescribed method of a sacrificial offering, but in any case, God warns Cain in Vs.7, saying, *"sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it."* But Cain ignores this warning and gives in to sin and kills his brother and here is where we see a comparison in the blood. After Cain has killed his brother God confronts him about his sin, just as He did to Eve (Gen.3:13), He asks Cain, *"What have you done?, The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground"*. Abel is already marred by the sin of his father and as the blood of Abel hits the ground it cries out to God for vengeance and retribution, it cries out to God for justice and highlights the sin of his brother. As the blood of Abel hits the ground it stains the earth with the sin that has been committed and it is a stain that taints the whole of God's creation. Further on in time, Jesus who is holy, innocent and blameless is also murdered by His own Creation but when Jesus' blood hits the ground, His blood cries out for restoration and redemption. When Jesus' blood hits the ground the stain covers God's creation with a grace that freely offers justification and forgiveness. Abel's blood called for the wrath of God, Jesus' blood satisfied that wrath.

Now let's look at another comparison to the blood, in the book of Exodus we have the exodus narrative and God implements the sacrificial system (see Ex.12:1-28), (read Ex.12:5-8). When God instructs the Jews as to what He requires from their sacrificial lamb God says, *"Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight. Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted on the fire; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it."* This preparation was in expectation of when God Himself would deal His final blow in the battle for His people. God says that where he sees the blood on the door posts and lintel He will passover the house and not allow the destroyer to enter the house and kill the inhabitants (Vs. 23), and again in this narrative we see the idea that God has shown the people what He expects from an acceptable sacrifice (Vs.26-28). An innocent spotless (representing blamelessness and perfection), lamb was killed to provide a meal that would sustain God's people through their journey. They were to consume the whole lamb and have nothing leftover, the blood of this young lamb was used to mark the door frame to the house, top and sides but not the door threshold, and then they had to wait for God to come in His terrible judgement. When God came He allowed the destroyer to kill every firstborn child of both man and beast, but when God came to a house with the blood He would passover it and the inhabitants were saved from His wrath and judgement (hence the name, Passover) and the first born was allowed to live.

God instituted this Passover meal to commemorate His saving grace of His elect people (Vs.43), and He instructs both Moses and Aaron that any slave who is paid for (redeemed), may also participate in the Passover celebration (Vs.44). Anyone who obeyed God's commandments, both Jew and stranger were allowed to participate in the Passover celebration and everyone was counted as one house with one law, the law of God.

We know this Passover lamb was a foretelling of Jesus and His sacrificial and redemptive work on the cross, yet it is so much more. Jesus was indeed the Passover Lamb as John the Baptist testified to in John 1:29, and that this Lamb would, "take away the sin of the world!" We have already established in our last session how Jesus was sinless and therefore was without blemish and, concerning His crucifixion, Mark 15:33 tells us, *And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.* Mark tells us that a supernatural darkness falls upon the place where Jesus is crucified. What made the darkness supernatural was this, the sixth hour is mid-day when the sun should have been at it's highest, but what happens is this, when Jesus offered Himself on the cross God turns His face away from Jesus, unable to look upon the sin that was laid upon Him and as He turns away, God creates a void, a darkness where His glory has left His Son, leaving Him alone on that cross. That darkness is foreshadowed in the twilight preparations of the lamb Exodus 12. God then takes the blood from the head, back, hands and feet of His Son and smears it on the cross. This is foreshadowed in the smearing of the blood on the door posts and lintel of Exodus 12, the blood was not placed on the threshold because this sacrifice is not to be trampled underfoot and disregarded. In Exodus 12 the blood is sprinkled before the lamb was roasted and wholly consumed, this foreshadowed Jesus bearing the wrath of God for us. We know from the O.T. (e.g. Sodom and Gomorrah), and we saw in our study of Revelation how God's judgement is a consuming fire and it was this judgement which was reserved for us that Jesus bore, He suffered the fire of God and He was totally consumed by it. The blood on the cross forms the doorway to salvation whereby God is satisfied and counts us as His own and His judgement passes over us.

In Exodus 12 the Jews were told to mark this day of liberation as a memorial day, a feast day for all generations to come (Ex.12:14), likewise we are commanded to eat of this Lamb and take part in this Passover celebration by Jesus at the last supper, (Mark 14:22-25; Matt. 26:26-29; Luke 22:19-20), and in doing so we identify Jesus as the Lamb of God. The roasted lamb of Exodus 12 was to be fully consumed to sustain the Jews on their exodus journey. The Lamb of God is also to be fully consumed by His followers by way of an ongoing sanctification whereby we nurture our relationship in prayer, worship and bible study, and as we learn more of our saviour, this consuming of the Lamb on the cross sustains us in our journey through this life until we are called to embark on our exodus journey.

So, in summary, we have seen how Jesus' body was created perfect and sinless and how His blood was different from any other. We have seen how, throughout the O.T. blood was used in sacrificial offerings to God and we saw how the blood of bulls and goats served only as a reminder of mans sin and was unable to take sin from the world (Heb.10:3-4). We have seen how God promised a redeemer from the time of the fall (Gen. 3:15), and how injustice has cried to God from the start (Gen.4:10). We have seen how the Exodus narrative gives us a clear and detailed depiction of the sacrifice Jesus made for us and we have seen how only the blood of Jesus is able to take away the sin of the world, and how His blood and His blood alone God has accepted as an atonement for our sins.

Finally, in order for there to be a sacrifice there has to be someone who offers the sacrifice and Scripture tells us plainly that it was God Himself who offered Jesus as the ultimate sacrifice, Paul tells us this in Romans 3:21-26, (read). We are all familiar with the Vs. in John 3:16, *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.* But do we realise that it was Jesus who said it! This confirms that the Holy Trinity was in complete agreement to the redemption of man from sin and the redemption promise of Gen. 3:15. Now we know just a few of the reasons why Jesus' blood is so remarkably different and why God accepted Him as a sacrificial offering for sin. Man fell though Adam and God came down and rescued us by His blood and while the sacrifice was once and for all, (Heb.10:10), the power of the blood goes on continually for God's people as John tells us in 1 John 2:1-2,

*My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.*

We are a people whom God has chosen for Himself and as such, whether we are Jew or Gentile, just like the O.T. Jewish household of Exodus 12, we are one people in one house, under one Law, under the one true God. We are not a sinless people, but we are a people who should sin less because we are covered with the blood of Christ.