

Why Biblical Understanding of Blood is Powerful

Read Time: 3 Minutes 10 Seconds

The unfolding river of Israel's story flows with currents of redemption, grace and beauty, and yet there was always a great cost—a tide that flows red with blood. Blood is significant in the Hebrew Bible, not because it points to moments of horror or cruelty, but simply because of its essence.

We often think that our life force is bound to the physical human heart. For example, when someone's heart stops beating, we pronounce that person dead. Some think our life center is in our minds, which is why when someone's brain stops functioning after a traumatic injury, that person is often taken off life support. But the Creator says that the life of the flesh is in the blood.

The fact is that the importance of blood is seen throughout the entire Hebrew Bible. Israel's birth as a nation took place when God delivered them out of Egypt. And how did God deliver the Israelites out of Egypt? It was through the blood of the lamb that they applied to the doorposts.

After the Lord took the Israelites out of Egypt through the blood of the lamb and brought them to Mount Sinai, Moses spent 40 days and 40 nights on top of the mountain. There he received Yahweh's divine revelation and covenant. Then he came down from the mountain and assembled all the Israelites before him to communicate the words that Yahweh had spoken. After Moses communicated God's covenant to them, the Israelites responded, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do!" (Ex. 19:8). Following this solemn, historic moment when the Israelites accepted the covenant, Moses sprinkled them with blood (Ex. 24:8).

Why are we tracing a line of blood all the way through the Hebrew Bible when we are focusing on Messianic prophecy? Because Yeshua's ministry climaxed with the shedding of His blood. All these incidents of blood in the Hebrew Bible were pointing to Yeshua and help us to understand who He is and what He has done for us.

As this blood-covered story of redemption in the Hebrew Bible continues to unveil toward an inevitable climax, Moses teaches the Israelites about certain holy days that must be celebrated to honor Yahweh. He gave them a calendar around which the entire life of the community of God would be oriented. Within that calendar, the highest and holiest day is Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. In the book of Leviticus chapter 16, the Lord gave precise instructions to Moses about how Yom Kippur was to be celebrated. The priest needed to take the blood of both a bull and a goat inside the most sacred place on earth, the Holy of Holies, located in the Tabernacle (which was later developed into the permanent Temple in Jerusalem).

Inside the Holy of Holies was the ark of the covenant, and inside the ark of the covenant were the Ten Commandments. On Yom Kippur, the high priest took the blood of the bull and the goat, brought it into the holy of holies, and sprinkled it on top of the ark of the covenant, often referred to as the Mercy Seat. Then, when the Lord saw the blood of the innocent animal on top of the ark of the covenant, He forgave the sins of the children of Israel. To stress this point again—"the life of the flesh is in the blood," and the Lord gave it to us "to make atonement for [our] souls" (Lev. 17:11).

Do you see why Jesus had to die on the cross and shed His blood—why it was so crucial for that spear to be thrust in His side, causing His blood to flow? It was so atonement could be made. The Hebrew Bible had telegraphed this with the blood of the Passover lamb, the blood Moses sprinkled Israel with at the base of Mount Sinai, and the blood that was applied to the Mercy Seat on Yom Kippur.

The only way man has access to God is when blood is shed. On the cross, an innocent One yielded His blood and died in the place of the guilty. All the sacrifices of the Hebrew Bible—all the blood that was spilled—was a shadow that was fulfilled by Messiah Yeshua.

*The preceding was excerpted from chapter 3 of **Rabbi Kirk Schneider's** book, "Messianic Prophecy Revealed" (Charisma House, Dec. 2022).*

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