

Lev. 17:11 “Life in the Blood”

For the Children: How do you feel when you see someone bleeding? Some people feel a bit sick, or even faint when they see a lot of blood – especially if it's their own! That is because we know that we need blood to keep on living – though if we lose too much the hospital can often put more into us to make us better. In the Old Testament, God told His people to spill the blood of certain animals as a sacrifice – to teach them that they needed the best blood of all, Jesus' blood, as a sacrifice to remove all our sins. His death and rising from the dead brings us forgiveness of sins and life forever. **Questions:** What is the deserved punishment for sinning against God? What did the animal sacrifices of the OT teach us about Jesus' sacrifice? How is His sacrifice better than that of the animals in the OT?

Introduction:

First Point: Respect for Life

- 1) The Reason for the Respect: This is God's arrangement, that the physical life of both man and animals is tied up with their blood. We should not act as if this were a trivial gift. Of course, in man's case he is also created with a soul, and in God's image. Therefore, the shedding of man's blood, by murder is a serious crime (Gen. 9:6). Even animals that shed man's blood must be killed (Gen. 9:5).
- 2) Reflected in Other Laws: The fact that “the life is in the blood” also results in other OT laws e.g., the ceremonial laws that made one unclean if there was contact with blood; the fact that meat had to be drained of blood before being eaten (Gen. 9:4).

Second Point: Rejection of Death

- 1) Death as Curse: The other side of this coin is that the death that occurs when the blood stops circulating is to be seen as a curse. The idea that death is natural and good must be rejected. Death is the punishment (the “wages”) of sin – physical death in the case of murder, but spiritual and eternal death for all who do not turn to the Lord Jesus. The ceremonial law that rendered a Jew unclean by close contact with death reinforced this message.
- 2) The Promise of Its Removal: The abnormality of death is seen in the promise of its removal from Creation when the Lord returns (1 Cor. 15:26; Rev. 21:4). By teaching us to shrink from death, God teaches us to look forward to the return of His Son (Rom. 8:18-25).

Third Point: Acceptance of Atonement

- 1) The OT Sacrifices: Sinners deserve death, the end of the life that is in their blood. But Lev. 17:11 promises that spilling a sacrificial animal's blood on the altar in the OT will result in atonement, the covering of those sins – enabling life to continue for the sinner. This teaches the principle of Substitution, Exchange and Ransom.
- 2) The Effective Atonement: Animals, however, were never an effective substitute for a human being. Their blood did not have the power to cover sins. Their value was in pointing to the sacrifice of the Lamb of God (Rev. 5:6), whose blood is truly efficacious. He was an acceptable Substitute, because He was truly human and without sin. As a man He could suffer the agony of hell, which an animal could not do. As a man He was also raised on our behalf, to give us resurrection-power and life. Moreover, as God, His work has infinite value. It is because of this that believers can have spiritual life now, forgiveness of sins, and look forward to an eternity in God's presence, with even our bodies restored.

Conclusion:

