

THE BLOOD OF CHRIST

TEXT: I JOHN 1:7--2:2

Introduction:

1. At this time of year Christians commemorate the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, and Jews celebrate the Passover.
2. From the earliest pages in Scripture, we see references to the doctrine of blood atonement.
3. Way back in Genesis 4, we see that the LORD was pleased with Abel's animal sacrifice, but had no respect for Cain's bloodless offering.
4. In Exodus 12, the LORD told the Israelites to take the blood of the sacrificial lamb, and strike it on their door posts, and God said, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you" (Ex. 12:13).
5. This prefigured the Lord Jesus Christ, for in I Corinthians 5:7, the apostle Paul said, "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us."
6. Leviticus 17:11 says, "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."
7. All these Old Testament sacrifices pointed to the cross. When we come to the New Testament, we read these words from John the Baptist, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).
8. When our Lord instituted the Lord's Supper, He said, "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28).
9. It is only the blood of Christ that can satisfy the righteous demands of our holy God. Romans 5:8, 9 says, "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."
10. We are "justified by His blood." We are saved from the wrath of God by the blood of Christ.
11. The Lord Jesus Christ lived in anticipation of the cross. As the day of His crucifixion drew near, He frequently told His disciples, "how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day" (Matt. 16:21).
12. And not just "be killed." Psalm 22:16 says, "They pierced my hands and my feet."

13. Zechariah 12:10 says, "And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced."
14. Hebrews 9:22 says, "Without shedding of blood is no remission."
15. When we talk about the blood of Christ, we should remember that it is incorruptible blood (I Peter 1:18, 19).
16. Furthermore, it is precious blood (I Peter 1:19).
17. It is pure blood (I Peter 1:19).
18. And it is redemptive blood. Ephesians 1:7 says, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."
19. It is cleansing blood. First John 1:7 says, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."
20. Revelation 1:5 says, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."
21. Furthermore, it is the blood of God. The apostle Paul told the elders at Ephesus to, "to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).
22. Lehman Strauss said, "His blood was the pure and royal Blood of heaven."

I. IT IS POWERFUL BLOOD (I JOHN 1:7).

1. Sin is the most dangerous thing in this world.
2. And sin is the ugliest thing in this world.
3. Sin nailed our Lord to the cross at Calvary.
4. James 1:15 says, "And sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."
5. Sin is like a dangerous serpent, and in fact sin came into this world through the serpent. The first letter in "sin" is s, which reminds us of the *hissss* of the serpent.
6. Sin destroys lives, marriages, families, and churches. Sin is destroying our nation.
7. But thank God, I John 1:7 says, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."
8. There is power in the blood!

Would you be free from the burden of sin?

There's power in the blood, power in the blood;

Would you o'er evil a victory win?

There's wonderful power in the blood.

*There is power, power, wonder-working power
In the blood of the Lamb;
There is power, power, wonder-working power
In the precious blood of the Lamb.*

9. The blood of Christ is not only powerful enough to wash away all our past sins, it has power to give us victory over present sin. Someone once asked the great preacher, Henry Clay Morrison, "Have you gotten to where you can't sin?" Dr. Morrison replied, "No, but I sure have gotten to where I can't enjoy it" (cf. I John 3:6).
10. Revelation 12:11 says they overcame the devil "by the blood of the Lamb."
11. In fact, all throughout the book of Revelation (28 times) the Lord Jesus Christ is referred to as "the Lamb."
12. Galatians 6:14 says, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."
13. When the Lord Jesus shed His blood on the cross, the world was crucified to us, and we were crucified to the world.
14. This means, the world, with all of its sinful attractions, has lost its power. If you are saved, you ought to understand that you are dead to sin, and dead to the world.
15. God wants us to know this (cf. Romans 6:6, 7).

II. IT IS CLEANSING BLOOD (I JOHN 1:7, 9).

1. Hebrews 9:14 says the blood of Christ purges our conscience. We need to have our conscience cleansed, to have our minds cleansed, to have our thinking cleansed, etc.
2. Isaiah 43:25 says, "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins."
3. The blood of Christ cleanses from past sins. Isaiah 44:22 says, "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee."
4. Psalm 103:12 says, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." East and west never meet.
5. "As far as the east is from the west" speaks of an immeasurable distance. You start out traveling west and eventually you go to the east, and keep going. It is a circle that is immeasurable, never ending.
6. It is immeasurable to man, but not to God, for God says, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us."

7. Micah 7:19 says, "He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea."
8. How deep is the sea? I read there are places in ocean that are seven miles deep, and God says He has buried our sins in the depths of the sea.
9. Psalm 79:8 says, "O remember not against us former iniquities: let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us: for we are brought very low."
10. Jeremiah 31:34 says, "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."
11. Man is forgetful, but God has a perfect memory. God can remember forever, but God chooses to forget our sin. Isaiah 43:25 says, "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins."
12. "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jer. 31:34).
13. When a sinner repents, and is saved by the grace of God, and God chooses to forget His sin. His sins are under the blood.
14. There's an old song...
15. *You ask my why I'm happy, I'll just tell you why,
Because my sins are gone.
They're underneath the blood on the cross of Calvary,
As far removed as darkness is from dawn.
In the sea of God's forgetfulness that's good enough for me,
Praise God, my sins are gone!*
16. Isaiah 1:18 says, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."
17. Many years ago, at the World's Fair held in Chicago, a conference was held of all the major world religions. An old-fashioned preacher named Cook was chosen to represent the Christian faith, and he was given an opportunity to demonstrate the superiority of Christianity over all the religions of all the worlds.
18. After all of the others -- Hindus, Buddhists, Moslems, and so on -- had spoken, this Dr. Cook went to the podium and quoted from Shakespeare's play "Macbeth."
19. Lady Macbeth was furiously rubbing her hands and she said, "Out, damned spot! out, I say...Here's the smell of the blood still: all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh, oh, oh!"

20. This preacher gave his recitation of Shakespeare and he was so effective it almost seemed like Lady Macbeth herself was up on the stage. And the crowd listened quietly and attentively as she looked at her hands indelibly stained with the blood of the innocent King Duncan: "Out...! Out, I say!"
21. Then Dr. Cook asked, "Are there any religions here this day that could cleanse the hands of Lady Macbeth? cleanse her from murderous blood? from guilt? Who has a religion that could cleanse her hands of this sinful stain, this spot that incriminates and condemns?"
22. One man stood to his feet and said, "I have no remedy for cleansing, but had I been able to talk to Lady Macbeth before she sinned, I might have been able to keep her from sinning."
23. Another stood to his feet and said, "I have no remedy for cleansing, but if I could have talked with Lady Macbeth, I could have helped her have peace of mind in spite of the fact that her hands were stained with blood."
24. Then Dr. Cook asked again, "Is there anyone who has a remedy for cleansing this condemning spot of which she has cried? Who can remove it? Who can cleanse it? Who can get it off her hand—this guilt, this sin?"
25. All was quiet. No one had a remedy.
26. Finally, the preacher said, "The Bible has a remedy. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all our sin" (I John 1:7).

III. IT IS PROPITIATING BLOOD (I JOHN 2:1, 2).

1. Propitiation is a good Bible word, but it is seldom used much these days. First John 4:10 says, God "loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."
2. This means God's anger or wrath is appeased.
3. God hates sin. Psalm 7:11 says, "God is angry with the wicked every day."
4. The Bible teaches that it is the blood of Christ that "propitiated", or appeases God (cf. Romans 3:23-25).
5. It is the blood of Christ that reconciles sinful men to a holy God. Colossians 1:20 says, "And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself."

CONCLUSION:

"A Hebrew's Search for the Blood of Atonement" by H.A. Ironside

It was the spring of the year, and I was holding some gospel meetings in San Francisco. Several times I addressed the Jews attending a "Mission to Israel." The experience of one old Jew interested me greatly, and as nearly as I can, I give his remarks in his own words.

He said: "This is Passover week among you, my Jewish brethren, and as I sat here, I was thinking how you will be observing it. You will have put away all leaven from your houses; you will eat the 'motsah' (unleavened wafers) and the roasted lamb. You will attend the synagogue services and carry out the ritual and directions of the Talmud, but you forget, my brethren, that you have everything but that which Jehovah required first of all. He did not say, 'When I see the leaven put away, or when I see you eat the motsah, or the lamb, or go to the synagogue,' but His word was, 'When I see the blood, I will pass over you' (Exodus 12:13). Ah, my brethren, you can substitute nothing for this. You must have blood, blood, BLOOD!"

As he repeated this word with ever-increasing emphasis, his black eyes flashed. "Blood." It is an awful word for one who reveres the ancient oracle and yet has no sacrifice. Turn where he will in the Book, the blood meets him, but he can't find it in the Judaism of the present. After a moment's pause, the patriarchal old man went on somewhat as follows: "I was born in Palestine, nearly seventy years ago. As a child I was taught to read the Law, the Psalms and the Prophets. I early attended the synagogue and learned Hebrew from the rabbis. At first I believed what I was told, that ours was the true and only religion, but as I grew older and studied the Law more intently, I was struck by the place the blood had in all the ceremonies outlined there, and I was equally struck by its utter absence in the ritual to which I was brought up.

"Again and again I read Exodus 12 and Leviticus 16-17, and the latter chapters especially made me tremble, as I thought of the great Day of Atonement and the place the blood had there. Day and night one verse would ring in my ears. 'It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul' (Leviticus 17:11). I knew I had broken the law. I needed atonement. Year after year, on that day, I beat my breast as I confessed my need of it, but it was to be made by blood, and there was no blood!

"In my distress, at last, I opened my heart to a learned and venerable rabbi. He told me that God was angry with His people. Jerusalem was in the hands of the Gentiles, the temple was destroyed, and a Muslim mosque was reared

up in its place. The only spot on earth where we dared shed the blood of sacrifice, in accordance with Deuteronomy 12 and Leviticus 17, was desecrated, and our nation scattered. That was why there was no blood. God had Himself closed the way to carry out the solemn service of the great Day of Atonement. Now we must turn to the Talmud and rest on its instructions and trust in the mercy of God and the merits of the fathers.

“I tried to be satisfied, but could not. Something seemed to say that the law was unaltered, even though our temple was destroyed. Nothing else but blood could atone for the soul. We dared not shed blood for atonement elsewhere than in the place the Lord had chosen. Then we were left without an atonement at all?

“This thought filled me with horror. In my distress I consulted many other rabbis. I had but one great question: Where can I find the blood of atonement?

“I was over thirty years of age when I left Palestine and went to Constantinople, with my still unanswered question ever before my mind and my soul exceedingly troubled about my sins.

“One night I was walking down one of the narrow streets of that city, when I saw a sign telling of a meeting for Jews. Curiosity led me to open the door and go in. Just as I took a seat I heard a man say, ‘The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin’ (1 John 1:7). It was my first introduction to Christianity, but I listened breathlessly as the speaker told how God had declared that ‘without shedding of blood is no remission’ (Hebrews 9:22), but that He had given His only begotten Son, the Lamb of God, to die, and all who trust in His blood are forgiven all their iniquities. This was the Messiah of Isaiah 53; this was the Sufferer of Psalm 22. Ah, my brethren, I had found the blood of atonement at last. I trusted it, and now I love to read the New Testament and see how all the shadows of the law are fulfilled in Jesus. His blood has been shed for sinners. It has satisfied God, and it is the only means of salvation for either Jew or Gentile.” Have you found the blood of atonement?

“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). God says, “When I see the blood, I will pass over you” (Exodus 12:13).