

Releasing the power of the blood.

Jim Smith

“I felt a great sense of oppression from the enemy. So I covered my body, mind and emotions with the blood of Jesus. I began to feel really inadequate, hopeless, small, ineffective. Was the power of the blood failing me? But then I realised that this was the enemy, increasing his attack because he was afraid - of the power of the blood of Jesus to defeat him, and set people, cities, and nations free. I took authority over the enemy, and each time I did that in the power of the blood, the oppression lifted. The attacks got weaker and weaker, until they stopped - all because of the power of the blood of Jesus.”

Introduction

I have started with this story because it teaches us a lot about the blood of Jesus. Here are some principles which we are going to have to understand, as we look deeper into this issue:-

- 1.** It is easy to do everything else, and forget that the power of victory is in the blood.
- 2.** Praying, studying and trying to apply the blood will mean that the enemy will give us a hard time. The Christian whose story I have quoted felt worthless, tired and ineffective. There are many other things which can come against us - sickness, family problems, financial problems, work problems, social problems and many others. The struggle to learn and apply the blood is not a theological experience but a powerful emotional one. We will feel it and experience it, as the blood moves from the theological to the real world.
- 3.** The enemy fears it. A catholic priest came to begin work in a town, and he was called out to see a sick member of his church. To his astonishment, when he met the person, a strange voice addressed him. It said “We are in charge of this town.” The priest had never experienced such a thing before, but he found the right response. “No you are not. We are going to preach about the blood of Jesus.” There was a pause, and then the strange voice replied “We know. That is what we are afraid of.”

4. The blood has incredible power. It will break the enemy, break every scheme, overcome all unforgiven blood, and set us free.

As we try to get an understanding of the theology of the blood, we are going to have to dig very deep. This is quite a complex subject. But it is worth the struggle to understand. We will finish up not only with good theology of the blood, but a good practical knowledge of how to release the power of the blood, based on good theology.

The history of the blood.

Abel - the blood and the problem

Adam lay with his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, "With the help of the Lord I have brought forth a man" Later she gave birth to his brother Abel. Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favour on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favour. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast. (Gen 4: 1-5)

Two men prepare a sacrifice for the Lord. Cain brings fruits of the soil, but forgets that God has already cursed the land. (Gen 3:17) Abel brings an animal sacrifice. Later in the Bible, we learn a principle which is helpful here:-

"For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life." (Lev 17:11)

In other words, blood carries the essence of life in it. So to make an offering which involves sacrifice and the shedding of blood is something very powerful. The fruits of the earth have no blood, no life in them.

Now Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field." And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

*Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?"
"I don't know," he replied. "Am I my brother's keeper?"*

The Lord said, "What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth."

Cain said to the Lord, "My punishment is more than I can bear. Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me."

But the Lord said to him, "Not so; if anyone kills Cain, he will suffer vengeance seven times over." Then the Lord put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him. So Cain went out from the Lord's presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden. (Gen 4:8-16)

At this point, a second issue concerning blood presents itself. It is so much more than just an issue of sacrifice - ***blood has power in itself***. Cain murders Abel, but the blood cries out from the ground for justice and vengeance. From this point on, we have to deal with the twin issues which this passage has exposed to us:

* Blood is to do with life and sacrifice. "The life is in the blood" will finally bring us to the sacrifice of Jesus.

* Innocent blood has the power to damage the spiritual flow of blessing in any heart or any nation. It has to be dealt with, or we are forever trapped at the moment of its spilling.

The blood of Abel stands as a great warning to subsequent spiritual history. It was innocent blood, and it remained unrepented of. Cain did not repent, but only complained at the unfairness of God's punishment. From his line we move to Lamech, who cried out

*Lamech said to his wives,
"Adah and Zillah, listen to me;
wives of Lamech, hear my words.
I have killed a man for wounding me,
a young man for injuring me.*

If Cain is avenged seven times, then Lamech seventy-seven times.”

(Gen 4:23-24)

In other words: - “Who is this God? If he has to avenge Cain seven times, he will have to avenge me seventy seven times.” No repentance, just arrogance, but an arrogance which would deeply damage humanity.

Passover – the power of the blood.

“On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn—both men and animals—and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the Lord. The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt. (Ex 12:12-13)

Moving on many centuries, we begin to see the power of the blood, from God’s perspective. The great plague of the firstborn must have looked very frightening from a human perspective. But there was a way to prevent it entering the house - by sprinkling the blood of the lamb on the doorposts of the house. This blood “spoke” to God, being sufficient to turn away his judgment. This is a massive development in our understanding of the blood, and its power. Even animal blood, offered within the covenant setting, could be effective. We cannot fail to remember the writer to the Hebrews, who taught that if animal blood could do this, how much more precious is the blood of Jesus.

Covenant - the guarantee of the blood

Then he said to Moses, “Come up to the Lord, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel. You are to worship at a distance, but Moses alone is to approach the Lord; the others must not come near. And the people may not come up with him.”

When Moses went and told the people all the Lord's words and laws, they responded with one voice, “Everything the Lord has said we will do.” Moses then wrote down everything the Lord had said.

He got up early the next morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain and set up twelve stone pillars representing the twelve tribes of Israel. Then he sent young Israelite men, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as fellowship offerings to the Lord. Moses took half of the blood and put it in bowls, and the other half he sprinkled on the altar. Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it to the people. They responded, "We will do everything the Lord has said; we will obey."

Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, "This is the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words." (Ex 24:1-8)

The Sinaitic covenant, the culmination of a number of covenants, and certainly the foundation covenant as far as Israel was concerned, is sealed with the sprinkling of blood. The blood marked out this event, protecting it from Satan's attack, and making it, in effect, everlasting. The new sanctuary was also sealed with blood, (Ex 29) making it an acceptable place for the Lord, and the ceaseless sacrifices were blood offered to God for forgiveness.

Blood - the pollution

Before we move on to the New Testament, we must consider this verse:-

"Do not pollute the land where you are. Bloodshed pollutes the land, and atonement cannot be made for the land on which blood has been shed, except by the blood of the one who shed it." (Num 35:33)

In many ways, this verse needs to be considered along with one we have already looked at:-

"What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground," (Gen 4:10,11)

Despite all our teaching about the blood, and despite all the animal sacrifices, the issue remains unsolved in the pre Christian era. Animal blood cannot atone for innocent human blood. The innocent blood of so many people continues to cry out to the Lord for justice and revenge. No amount of Temple sacrifice, or law following can change this basic theological principle. With this in mind, let's turn to the New Testament teaching.

Jesus - the perfect sacrifice

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)

In order to deal with the blood, a better blood was needed. That blood was the blood of Jesus.

He was “the lamb of God”

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)

He was the perfect offering

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Cor 5:21)

He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." (1 Peter 2:22)

We have to be identified with that blood

Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you." (John 6:53)

We have to let the blood be identified with us

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, and they all drank from it. "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," he said to them. "I tell you the truth, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God." (Mark 14:22-25)

The blood showed its power at the death of Jesus:-

At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split.

The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. They came out of the tombs, and after Jesus' resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many people. (Matt 27:51-53)

The blood was so powerful that it established its control over sin, (the curtain was torn) over nature, (the rocks split) and over death. (The tombs were opened.) The sacrifice of the blood was complete. A greater sacrifice than that of bulls and goats had accomplished its mission. The Church soon began to understand this truth.

Blood of Jesus - the perfect sacrifice

The New Testament writers teach extensively about the blood. Here are a few key examples:-

“and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. (Col 1:20)

For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God. (1 Peter 1:18-21)

When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here¹ he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation. He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! (Hebrews 9:11-14)

They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. (Rev 12:11)

This is a lot of theology to absorb, and I encourage people to struggle and get hold of it. Fortunately, it is easily summarised:-

The blood of Abel began a very sad line of theology. The innocent blood of Abel, unrepented of, continued to be amplified down the centuries. Much more innocent blood was added, all crying out for justice and revenge.

The blood of animals could not appease this blood. The life which was in this innocent blood was the life of humanity, not the animal creation. But which human could possibly atone for all this blood?

The Old testament ends with this question unanswered.

Jesus had the purer, sinless blood of humanity and divinity. He could offer the pure sacrifice, and he did at Calvary. His blood speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

At his second coming, all this innocent blood will cease crying out. His better word will end it all.

But we are living in the time between his death and his return, so still innocent blood can cry out, and in that crying, damage a nation's soul. I have read people who tell me that this is not the New Testament message. But there is no division between old and new. The old says that unrepented blood stains the land. It did when those words were written, and it still does today. This will never end permanently until the parousia of Jesus. The Old Testament tells us that the blood has to be dealt with by the one who spilt it. Fortunately, Jesus is willing to stand in that place. He can deal with the spilt blood. But his blood has to be brought to bear on those situations which still harm us today.

Practical things

There was once a man descended from a royal house who needed to make a long trip back to headquarters to get authorization for his rule and then return. But first he called ten servants together, gave them each a sum of money, and instructed them, 'Operate with this until I return.'(Lk 19:12-13)

“ if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.” (2 chron 7:14)

We have to deal with things, until the Lord returns. There is plenty to deal with - big and small. The big things get highlighted - Auschwitz, Katyn, the Rumbula massacre, the stain of the death marches. There will be many other events, known locally, and there will be many places of spilling of innocent blood which we do not yet know about. How do we deal with all of this?

We must begin by remembering our theology. The blood of Jesus speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. By finding and bringing these places of innocent blood under the blood of Jesus, we negate the bad influence which comes from it. We have to believe this, because we often will not see any difference in the earthly places for a while. (Daniel and the Prince of Persia. Daniel 10:12-14)

We also have to accept that part of bringing things under the blood is exposing the evil which led to the shedding of the blood, and acts of repentance for that spilling. This is what Cain should have done,. We must not make his mistake. We also have to accept that repentance leads to new attitudes, forgiveness, restoration and a turning to a joint future, more blessed and free from the past. These things are easy to write, but have proved very hard to do. The human spirit resists repentance, or looks for an easy repentance which bears no fruit. Finding the blood opens the door to a healing process - but a very painful one.

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