

THE LAMB OF GOD

The function of human blood was not understood until Wm Harvey in 1615. Long before Harvey the Bible stated "the life of the flesh is in the blood" (Leviticus 17:11). From the earliest of times there has been a spiritual reverence given to blood by God. God told Cain his murdered brother's blood "cries out to me." First reference to its sacredness.

God is holy, righteous and blameless. Therefore He cannot tolerate sin in heaven. 2 Peter 2:4 says "For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment."

Revelation 12:7-8 tells us "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, and they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. And the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." In some way Satan led a rebellion in heaven and persuaded angels to join him.

Satan persuaded Adam and Eve to rebel also. Since Adam and Eve Satan has persuaded all of mankind to rebel leading Paul to remark, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Thus sinful man cannot stand in the presence of a holy, righteous and perfect God unless something could be done to make man free of sin.

Thus, beginning with Adam, God required that animal sacrifices be made to Him. Sacrifices had a spiritual mysterious connection with the forgiveness of sins. There could be no approach or fellowship with God apart from the shedding of blood. When the blood and flesh of a dead animal was offered to God it served as a substitute payment for man's sin.

Sacrifices originated after the Garden of Eden following the "fall" of man. Thus hundreds upon hundreds of animal sacrifices were offered up to God by the Patriarchs and later by the Israelites, first on stone altars and later at the temple.

The Bible is clear that satisfaction or payment for human sins was made by the blood/flesh of a dead animal. Leviticus 17 says, "It is the blood that makes atonement for the soul." In Hebrews 9:22 the writer says, "without shedding of blood there is no remission."

Animal sacrifices were never perfect and thus they were inadequate to remove sin. Hebrews 10:3, 4 says, "But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins. Thus no sins were forgiven, only recalled every year. Sins were not rolled forward each year as you hear some say. Sins were only recalled each time. God had to have a perfect sacrifice.

That perfect sacrifice was none other than God himself, God the Son. Paul tells us, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but emptied Himself by taking the form of a servant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:5).

Once John saw Jesus walking toward him. He said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" John reminds us, "We have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" (Ephesians 1:7). God provided the perfect sacrifice; "The Lamb of God" makes it possible for man to stand in His presence in heaven and to share in its glories.

THE LAMB OF GOD

This brings us to the gospel story as revealed in God's word.

- (1) Jesus came down from heaven to earth taking on human flesh becoming a man.
- (2) Jesus went to the cross where he shed His blood on the cross. He was the perfect sacrifice since He lived a life without sin.
- (3) He died after six terrible hours of anguish on the cross.
- (4) He was buried in the new tomb of Joseph of Arimathea.
- (5) He arose from the grave on the third day and would be seen by many witnesses.
- (6) He ascended back to heaven to reign over his kingdom.

He accomplished two wonderful things for us.

- (1) He made it possible for us to receive forgiveness of our sins by shedding His blood. The book of Revelation is replete with statements declaring the glory of the shed blood of Christ and what it accomplished. For example **Revelation 5:6** says, the elders fell down and sang a new song, saying: **"For you were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood."**
- (2) He arose from the grave making it possible for us to arise from the grave also. Men have always feared the mysteries of death. It is the number one fear. Pagan religions speculated all kinds of ridiculous things that would happen after death. The Sadducees in Jesus' time did not believe in a resurrection. Paul said there were some Christians in Corinth who denied a resurrection. He argues that **"If Christ is not risen, then our preaching is vain and your faith is also vain."** He argues that that this last enemy of man will be destroyed.

The vital question for us now is **how do we appropriate the blood of Jesus to our sins?**

Paul gives us the answer to this vital question in **Romans 6:3, 4**. **"Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him by baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."**

Jesus shed His blood in His death. We are baptized into his death where He shed His blood. Therefore, it is in baptism we come into contact with His blood. Water itself does not cleanse. It is the blood of Jesus that cleanses us of all our sins. Peter says it's **"not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God."** Baptism is an act of faith of faith on our part.

Do we believe God when He tells us that we reach the blood of Jesus in baptism? The blood of Jesus is one of the most sublime mystery of the divine wisdom of God. God took four thousand years preparing for it. Only when it was the proper time was the **LAMB OF GOD** sent to accomplish the forgiveness of our sins. We are fortunate to live in the age where His blood is available.

Some will argue it is by faith only that we are saved. This circumvents the blood of the Lamb. Others say just pray **"the sinner's prayer."** This totally ignores the blood of Jesus. Still others say, **"Pray through until you have an experience."** Praying will not put one under the blood of Christ. Baptism will. **What about you? Are you ready to accept God's divine grace? Do you want His precious blood applied to your sins? Then do it now!**