

Doctrine of the Blood of Christ: Animal Blood, Lev 17:11; Brass Altar Foreshadows the Cross: "Blood" Refers to the Spiritual Death of Christ, Jn 19:28-30, Tetelestai

II. Animal Blood:

- 1) Animal sacrifices illustrated the work of Christ by teaching the concept of the substitutionary sacrifice of an innocent creature.
- 2) This was meaningful because the animal's blood represented its life given on behalf of others since an animal's blood is his life.

Leviticus 17:11 - The life [נֶפֶשׁ *nephesh*: when used of animals it refers to its physical life] of the animal is in its blood and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls [נֶפֶשׁ *nephesh*: when used for mankind it refers to the human soul]; for it is the blood [of the animal] which makes atonement for one's life.

Thieme, R. B., Jr. *The Blood of Christ*. 5th ed. (Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 2002), 12:

When the Scripture states that "the life [נֶפֶשׁ *nephesh*] of the flesh is in the blood" (Lev. 17:10-14), the context is referring to the physical life of the sacrificial animal. The Hebrew word *nephesh* sometimes means "life" and sometimes "soul," but when used of animals, it means life. When referring to man, *nephesh* may be translated "soul" or "the inner being" (Gen. 2:7). Because animals do not possess a soul, the seat of animal life is in its physical blood. However, the seat of man's life is the soul resident in his body.

The soul is the image of God in mankind (Gen. 1:26-27; cf., 2:7). Of all God's creatures no other is said to be made in the image of God. Therefore, man is unique in his possession of a soul.

- 3) An animal's physical life ends when its blood is caused to flow out of its body, thus the flow of blood out from a sacrificial animal results in its physical death.
- 4) These details become especially important as we examine the correlation between the burnt offering conducted by the Levite priests and the sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

III. The Brass Altar Foreshadows the Cross:

- 1) Among the Levitical offerings there was the burnt offering that depicted the saving work of Christ on the cross.
- 2) It required the shedding of animal blood and resulted in a representative analogy rather than a real one.
- 3) The reason it is "representative" and not "real" is that Jesus did not bleed to death on the cross. Nevertheless, He experienced two deaths: (1) spiritual death while being judged for our sins, and (2) physical death.
- 4) He referred to His spiritual death as the "cup" in Matthew 26:39 when he prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me ..."
- 5) This request did not refer to his physical death about which He was fully aware and fully prepared:

John 10:17b - "... I lay down My life so that I may take it again [resurrection body].

v. 18 - "No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father."

- 6) The Lord voluntarily laid down His physical life in Luke 23:46, “Father, into Your hands I commit My human spirit.” He took it up again at the resurrection as is confirmed by the angel in Matthew 28:6, “He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said.”
- 7) Thus the “cup” makes reference to His spiritual death. The analogy of the animal’s physical death points to the reality of the Lord’s spiritual death.
- 8) At no point during his Passion did the Lord loose very much blood. There were wounds that did bleed, but He never bled to death.
- 9) There were wounds in His wrists from the iron nails (*clavi trabales*) driven through them into the crossbeam (the *patibulum*), and likewise through his feet into the upright beam (the *staurós*). He suffered from head wounds from Roman soldiers striking Him with a reed (a *kálamos*) and a “crown of thorns” in His scalp. His back was lacerated by being flogged with a *phragéllion*, a whip made of leather thongs, weighed with sharp pieces of bone or lead that were designed to tear flesh.
- 10) The physical pain of these things far outweighed the insignificant loss of blood caused by them.
- 11) It was not His physical death that resulted in atonement, but His spiritual death. The Lord was alive and cognizant when He announced that the work of salvation was completed in:

John 19:28 - Jesus, knowing [οἶδα, *oída*: to perceive by the senses; to be aware; to understand: the Lord’s mental condition retained complete clarity of thought and concentration throughout the ordeal] that all things [the work associated with salvation] had already been accomplished [τετέλεσται, *tetelestai*], so that [ἵνα, *hina*: introduces (1) purpose: to fulfill the prophecies of Psalm 22:15 & 69:21, and (2) result: He was given drink in v. 29] the Scripture might be fulfilled [τελειωθῆ, *teleiōthēi*: to come to completeness: all prophecy will eventually fulfilled] said, “I am thirsty.”

v. 29 - A jar full of sour wine was standing there; so they put a sponge full of the sour wine upon a branch of hyssop [used at the first Passover to smear the blood of the lamb on the doorposts of their home prior to the tenth plague (Exodus 12:22)] and brought it up to His mouth.

v. 30 - When Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, “It [atonement] is finished!” [τετέλεσται, *tetelestai*] And He bowed His head and gave up His human spirit [physical death].”

- 12) The verb “is finished” is the perfect passive indicative of:

τελέω, teleō - “to carry out one’s own will or that of others; to bring to an end; to fulfill obligations; to complete; to conclude”

- perfect: Intensive: places emphasis on the existing results. The importance of this tense is defined by:

Dana, H. E. and Julius R. Mantey. *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament.* (Toronto: The Macmillan Co., 1955), 202:

The Intensive Perfect. It is the significance of the tense to place emphasis upon the existing results, for it is distinctively the tense of “finished product.” When special attention is thus directed to the results of the action, stress upon the existing fact is intensified. This is the emphatic method in Greek of presenting a fact or condition. It is the strong way of saying that a thing *is*.

- passive: Jesus received the action of being imputed the sins of the world and their subsequent judgment.
- indicative: Declarative: a statement of biblical and historical fact.

- 13) The impact that this verb has on the gospel of salvation is immeasurable. The work necessary for salvation was completed before our Lord died physically.
- 14) Amplification of the importance of this is provided by:

Yeager, Randolph O. *The Renaissance New Testament*. (Gretna, La.: (Pelican Publishing Co., 1982), 8:458:

The intensive perfect passive in τετέλεσται points backward to an accomplished task, completed in full at a time prior to the time of speaking. Therefore, it also indicates a present state/condition as a result of the past completion. The real payment of the wages of sin required that Jesus experience death in the sense of total alienation from God [spiritual death]. Thus we have Jesus, still alive in the physical sense, yet pointing to His work of redemption as an accomplished fact in the past, the past, in this case, being the immediately previous three hours – since noon, during the time that darkness covered the earth. His physical death was not something that was required for the payment of a sin debt which had now been paid in full.

- 15) The concept of *tetelestai* referring to the payment of a debt in full is confirmed by archaeological discovery:

Walvoord, John and Roy B. Zuck (eds.). *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*. (Wheaton: Victor Books 1983), 340:

John 19:30. The sixth word or saying that Jesus spoke from the cross was a single Greek word *tetelestai* which means **It is finished**. Papyri receipts for taxes have been recovered with the word *tetelestai* written across them, meaning “paid in full.” This word on Jesus’ lips was significant. When He said, “It is finished” (not “I am finished”), He meant His redemptive work was completed. He had been made sin for the people (2 Cor 5:21) and had suffered the penalty of God’s justice which sin deserved.