

The Blood of Atonement Covering the Soul

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[0 : 00] We can sing to God's praise now from Psalm 51.

Psalm 51, and we're going to sing from verse 6 to verse 13. Psalm 51 at verse 6.

Behold, thou in the inward parts, with truth delighted art, and wisdom thou shalt make me know within the hidden part. Do thou with hyssop sprinkle me, I shall be cleansed so.

Yea, wash thou me, and then I shall be whiter than the snow. Of gladness and of joyfulness make me to hear the voice that so these very bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.

All mine iniquities blot out, thy face hide from my sin. Create a clean heart, Lord, renew a right spirit me within. Cast me not from thy sight, nor take thy Holy Spirit away.

[1 : 09] Restore me thy salvation's joy, with thy free spirit me stay. Then will I teach thy ways unto those that transgressors be, and those that sinners are, shall then be turned unto thee.

We can sing these verses 6 to 13 of Psalm 51. Behold, thou in the inward parts, with truth delighted art.

Behold thou in the inward parts, with truth delighted art. The hearts with the truth divine divine, And wisdom thou shalt be seen, O Within the hidden heart.

To know with this of strength of me, I shall be tested so, In watch of me and then, And I shall be white as an old.

O gladness and your joyfulness, It give me to hear the voice, That's all these heavenly woes, With love has broken in its voice.

[3 : 18] Almighty, with peace, Lord, Thy peace from my sin, Create a dream of glory, For in you, arise in me within.

Cast me in your throne, Thy side, your feet, Thy holy spirit away, Praise joy, may life not be destroyed, With life is spent me still.

Then will I teach thy wisdom, To those that can scare me, And those that say, Their love shall lend Eternative truth.

Can we turn now to Leviticus, The book of Leviticus, And chapter 17, And we can read again at verse 10.

And whatsoever man there be, Of the house of Israel, Or of the strangers that sojourn among you, That eateth any manner of blood, I will even set my face against that soul, That eateth blood, And will cut him off from among his people.

[5 : 40] 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 atonement for the soul. For it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.

Moses, the servant of the Lord, is not giving us a lesson, in human biology or human physiology, nor is he providing us with information about a balanced diet, of course if the Lord meant him to do that by the guiding of the spirit he could do all of these things he could tell us how the human body functions and all the parts of it in concert and so on but his purposes are more elevated than that he has a much higher and purer motive and he wants us to understand the provision that God has made in Christ Jesus for the sinful condition of mankind without modern sensibilities we would tend to shy away from the blood and gore of biblical sacrifices and there are many of them and they are given to us in great detail and they are very much repeated different times, different occasions they require different modes of offering but all commanded by God and we do ourselves at this service if we dismiss them because of our feeling of discomfort being uncomfortable that is a danger

I was reading one of the well the late James Van Tholen he passed away he was more a student before he became a preacher of the gospel he passed away in his early 30s but he was quite well known in America anyway and I'm not sure what denomination he belonged to but I noticed something that he said which probably would strike a chord with some of you and this is what he said Leviticus is just too primitive there is just too much blood on everything and there is too much sacrifice we are troubled by that refrain an aroma pleasing to the Lord as if God can be pacified and appeased by sinful creatures if they just offer up to him the right animal or the right amount of blood now he was being honest he was being honest about his feelings when he read through the portion of the scripture that is the Pentateuch and he is being honest in the sense that the view that is shared with us there is a view that is held by many even within the Church of Christ because the sacrifices of the Old Testament are offensive to them and that is the case but having said that and having quoted that preacher

I don't want to leave you with the impression that although this is what he feels that is not what he believes he goes on to say the following behind the ceremony and the ritual and the sacrifices in Leviticus is the idea that for atonement to be made for human beings to be made right with God blood must be shed this is God's way he cannot simply forgive he cannot just declare a general amnesty so in a sense what you've got in that person who brings his thinking to the table as it were he commits it to writing allows others to read it he is honestly saying what some people believe concerning the rituals and the practices that God gave to the

[11 : 21] Old Testament church that he meant the church to pursue and adhere to and commit to and that does not mean that when we read these things that we're necessarily comfortable with it but if you are a Bible believer if you are a committed Christian who believes in the atonement by way of Jesus Christ you know that God means us to understand through the typology and the practices given to his people by the Lord the instruction that was conveyed to them remember that many of these people who received instruction from God were in the first instance given very practical demonstrations that were much more powerful in their experience than the word alone although the word accompanied the instruction that he gave to them to follow but because of their need for a greater and a more powerful and a more tangible explanation very often the types and the typology that God gave conveyed to them the truth in a way that was inescapably

God's truth so what we have in verse 10 is a reminder to us of an instruction given by God concerning blood and it is not just an instruction it is a prohibition it is not the first time he gives us if you go back and read through Leviticus you'll find the same prohibition brought to the attention of the people of God that they are to treat blood the blood that is shed the blood of an animal even the blood of the fellow human beings in a specific way and following the prohibition being yet again set before us we see clear instruction given concerning what the blood in the context of sacrifice means what it means to the believer that it conveys to us as to them a certain truth concerning our need as fallen sinful creatures in need of salvation and how

God was to provide it for us now there are many things I suppose that we find in this chapter and we're not going into the detail of it simply to say at the very outset as far as the prohibition is concerned we ask ourselves the question what is the reason for what God prohibits here he says to us whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel of the strangers that sojourn among you that eateth any manner of blood I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood what is the reason for that it seems a strange one why blood more than anything else and it is not something that is at the beginning of the chapter whosoever there be of the house of Israel kills an ox a lamb or a goat in the camp or a killer of the camp brings it not to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation to offer an offering before the

Lord and before the tabernacle of the Lord blood shall be imputed to that man and that is something that we overlook in a sense that requires us to wonder why is such an import given to the death of a beast because there is significance given to it by virtue of the fact that that beast is a beast that possesses blood and its blood in the eyes of the Lord has significance especially where it is meant that the beast that is slain is brought before the Lord and offered to the Lord and the blood of that beast is to be handled in a specific way so what does this verse say to us what does the prohibition say to us there may be a whole host of different reasons for it but I think the main one is this that in the ecclesiastical history of the

Jews of the people of God there was exposure to those who were idolaters and who were pagan and who were involved in sacrifices to these idols that they served and a very major part of the relationship with their idols and their gods and their deities involved them in sacrificing the beasts any beast it doesn't matter God distinguishes between the beast that is clean and the beast that isn't and he distinguishes in the way that it is to be offered and at what point the idolater had no such distinction and with regard to the blood what they did was they would come with their offerings and they would pour out the blood of that beast and often they would either pour it out into a trench or into a pit and that was offered to their idols as a offering a drink offering to their idols and when

[18:11] God requires his people to come with their offerings they are informed concerning the manner of their offering how they are to conduct themselves and what their offering means they present their offering as we read here in this chapter chapter they may bring them unto the Lord in verse 5 unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation unto the priest and offer them for peace offerings unto the Lord and the blood that is given is not used in the way the idolaters use it it is given to the Lord to the priest who brings it before the Lord and the blood is applied as God commands it instead of quenching the thirst of God as the idolaters do what they come with is an obedience a sacrifice of obedience that acknowledges the right that God has over all living and those who bring the animal that is slain in whatever context whether it is as a sin offering or a burnt offering or whatever category of offering it is it is different to the kind of offering that they may have been exposed to and you can see this this teaching is brought forward into the

New Testament where you where you find for example in the book of Acts you find there a conflict within the New Testament church where there is pressure brought to bear upon new converts by those who belong to a sect of the Christian church who want to lay more emphasis on the on the practices of the Old Testament the sacrificial system the mosaic system and so on and especially when they are Gentile converts the emphasis that is placed upon them who make a confession of faith in Jesus Christ is that they must submit to circumcision for example and you see that argument rising up again in the book in the epistle of Paul to the

Galatians but early on in the church it manifests its head and in chapter 5 of the book of Acts Peter is there and he speaks concerning how this body within the New Testament church newly planted newly risen up they are pressurizing these new converts especially those who had no background in Judaism to embrace some of the teachings that were part of the Judaistic religion and Peter says neither our fathers or we were able to bear the yoke upon the neck of the disciples that you are wanting them to bear the law and the application of the law as a means to their salvation as it were but if you look at Acts chapter 15 words were to be written to the

Gentiles who turned to God that they abstain from pollutions of idols and from fornication and from things strangled and from blood and again later on in that chapter abstain from meat over to idols of the Lord through Moses, the words of the apostles, where they pointed to the sacrifice for sin offered by Jesus Christ, which dealt with sin through covering it.

So the main reason, I think, was that here and in the New Testament context in which these words appear, that they and we, if we are like them, are to separate ourselves from former practices where the wrong kind of emphasis was upon blood in that way and embrace instead the biblical principles that life through the blood means something completely different.

[24 : 01] So what does this passage teach us? 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.

Now, you can see why. Here he clearly means us to understand that there is an emphasis placed on the blood, but there is a wrong emphasis which must be guarded against and there is a true emphasis which should be placed and understood for the good of their soul.

So the second thing that we have, and the main thing we have here, is that it is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul. Many of the accommodators say that a more accurate rendition of the Hebrew in this instance is, for the soul of the flesh is in the blood or the life is in the blood.

The soul is in the blood or the life is in the blood. And the reason for that, the reason why that should be understood, is that there is no other way that we can understand that other than what we can understand simply by reading this at face level, is that it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.

And not just the blood, but the blood of sacrifice. And not just the blood of sacrifice, but the blood of sacrifice that it points to, as it must do in this instance, it points forward to the sacrifice that was offered by the Lord Jesus Christ.

[26 : 08] And that it is this blood specifically that is referred to. Otherwise, every other offering, every other sacrifice that required the shedding of blood, there was the need for it, there was the requirement for it, there were explanations given as to how and to when and to where the blood should be used, and by whom, and in what way, and so on.

But it was always directing their attention to one sacrifice for sin that was to be offered by another. The worshipper is the one who comes with that sacrifice.

And yet, when we read it, it seems that the emphasis falls upon not the worshipper who comes with the sacrifice, but the God who requires the worshipper to come.

Read again what is said. For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement.

Now, that's not a misprint. It's not bad grammar. However, it is an emphasis on this being God's doing. The worshipper comes with the sacrifice, and the blood is brought according to the requirements.

[27 : 39] And there's a whole host of different types of sacrifice, and we could list them, and we could get embroiled in all kinds of detail, which is not necessary for the purpose of this.

But the fact is that you would think that the emphasis in this verse, the life of the flesh is in the blood, and you have given it upon the altar to make an atonement.

The author, the person who comes with the sacrifice, has brought it to make an atonement. That's not what we are told. I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls.

And the emphasis is there for this reason, that the atonement is possible because of the God who has required it, and the blood that is put on the altar, that is the blood that is made efficacious for atonement.

The efficacy is not in the blood as it is, although the emphasis is, as we saw, for the soul of the flesh is in the blood, or the life is in the blood.

[28 : 57] The emphasis there, you would think, is on the efficacy of blood per se. But no, it is the blood on the altar. It is the blood of sacrifice.

It is the blood that is offered by God through the medium of his own people in obedience to his revealed will.

And the reason for them coming in this way is given by God. God has appointed the blood to make atonement.

It's not a blood sacrifice like the heathen have. It's not a blood sacrifice to satisfy his thirst. You go to the Psalms and you find God offended by those who come thinking that the superabundance of sacrifices are what is going to please him or satisfy him.

That's wrong thinking. It's perverse thinking as far as God is concerned. Some look at this version and they say, well, what Moses wants us to understand is that everyone who comes with a sacrifice to God, they come with animal sacrifices or they come with the fruit of the ground.

[30 : 24] And who's the possessor of these? Who's the God of heaven and earth? Who is the one who possesses the fish in the ocean and the animals that are on the land?

They are his. And because they are his, he can speak like this and think that when the author comes, all he's doing is coming to God with what is his own. But that's not what this passage is saying to us.

It may be true, and it is true, that God is sovereign, that God possesses all things, that we come to him. what do we have when we come to accept what we have been given?

That stands to reason. But it's not the truth that is in evidence here. The word atonement puts a different complexion on it.

And the word atonement requires us to understand that the blood that is brought is brought for a specific purpose, and the sacrificial nature of it and the application of it on the altar tells us that without that, there could not be any atonement.

[31 : 45] You go to the New Testament again, and the New Testament is simply dealing with the teachings of the Old Testament and applying them in the light of what God has done in the passion of Jesus Christ.

Hebrews chapter 9 is important in this regard. The Holy Ghost, this signifying that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing, which was a figure for the time then present in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices that could not make him that did the service perfect as pertaining to the conscience, which stood only in meats and drinks and diverse washings and carnal ordinances imposed on them until the time of reformation.

But Christ, in come and high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building, neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

For if the blood of bulls and of goats and the ashes of unheathers sprinkling the unclean sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God, and so on.

Now clearly, all of these types and metaphors in the Old Testament, we understand them to be pointing and directing us to the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

- [33 : 42] The apostle takes these, and they are explained in light of what Christ has done. And equally true is the fact that it is the blood on the altar that is all important.

These words marvelously foreshadow the importance of the cross as God's way of salvation, whereby atonement is accomplished to God's satisfaction.

The blood on the altar atones. That's what he says. Not just the blood atones, but the blood on the altar atones.

The very word atone means you and me to understand that there is sin in my heart and your heart.

The existence of sin and the offence that sin brings is what necessitates the need for atonement. To atone is to remove that offence, but remove it in such a way that the person offended is no longer offended.

- [35 : 05] The person offended is God. And by reason of the atonement, that atonement which he himself has introduced to us, by way of the blood being shed and applied to the altar.

All of these things. Blood shed applied to the altar. Therefore, atonement takes place.

Looking at that passage in Hebrews, Principal Don MacLergo saying, What atones is blood sprinkled against the altar.

The blood of a slaughtered animal deprived of life. Christ died once, Christ died once, was sacrificed once, to take away the sins of many.

We know that John McSween, in his own comments on what this passage means, adds to that thought, The word atone has at its heart the meaning covering.

- [36 : 18] To atone is to cover. What is covered? Well, we sang in Psalm 32, that our sins are covered.

But is that in the first instance, what is covered in the atonement? Well, according to MacSween, it isn't. Because he says, it is the soul that is covered, in the first place, not the sin, which is its secondary meaning.

Again, as Hebrews 9, reminds us, it is the great high priest, that entered with blood. His blood.

Every other priest, every other high priest, had to enter with blood. Otherwise, their entrance was debarred. And if their entrance was debarred, it was because they did not come, as they were ordained to come, as they were required to come.

But when they came, they came with the blood of brute beasts slain. And then they applied the blood, as God commanded, before the altar, and upon the altar, sprinkling the blood.

- [37 : 28] But Christ, unlike everybody else, he came with his own blood. And his blood, as the Lamb of God, as Peter says, is what makes it precious.

It is the precious blood of the Lamb of God. And when you read the Pentateuch, when you read Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, you may find whole passages there, that are so full of things, that you may think are offensive to your senses.

But remind yourself of this, they are so full of Christ. They are so full of what Christ was to accomplish, on the cross, that they are so full of the atonement, what God did, by way of his son, to cover our offenses, to blot him out through, well these words, it is the blood, that maketh an atonement for the soul.

The blood of sacrifice. The blood upon the altar. Was it enough for Christ to die? Yes, his death was significant.

But it was a sacrificial death. It was a death, that atoned, because he was dealing, as the great high priest of his people, for their sins, dealing with their sins, on their behalf.

[39 : 09] I know that there are some people, read this passage, and they say, oh my goodness, it is talking about not eating blood. But we have to, remind ourselves, remind ourselves of the context, remind ourselves of the principle teaching, of it.

I know that, the late principle, John L. Mackay, would never, on the basis of the teaching, of the Old Testament, consider, eating anything, that had blood in it, because he applied that, teaching very strictly, to his own, understanding, of what it meant.

But here, the main emphasis, is, upon, the atoning blood. That blood, that was sacrificed, that, beast that was sacrificed, its blood, shed, and applied, on the altar, for the salvation, for the atonement, for the covering, of the soul, from the wrath, of the Holy God, because that is, part of it.

It's, the wrath of God, that's propitiated, it's turned away, and, it doesn't, doesn't fix upon, a sinner, anymore.

Well may God, encourage us to think, of these things, for ourselves. Let us pray. Lord help us, to understand that, while there are many, passages in the scripture, that we may not spend, much time on, because they appear to us, to be repetitive, or they, may contain, matter that we find, belongs in the, Old Testament, and we have sufficient, in the New.

[40 : 49] But the truth is, that without, what is taught, in the Old Testament, what is taught, in the New, makes little, or no sense. We give thanks, that your word, is an organic unity, from Genesis, to Revelation, and it speaks, preeminently, of one, who is Christ, the Lord.

We are directed, to him, and we pray, that as we look, to him, by whichever means, you have ordained, that the eyes, of our understanding, will be opened. Bless us together, we pray, forgive our sins, in Jesus name, Amen.

Amen. I'm going to sing, in conclusion, some verses in Gaelic, again singing, from Psalm 51.

Psalm 51, at verse 14. from Psalm 51, to Jesus, O yeh a yeh mavant, shenyi gu hard hirtiranto, mo chengir hansgachar, mo vele taartre dhujh suas foskele ge na gras, en shinta volev le mavel kudhimighe gu hard, o shinta falla sirshami, o yeh a yeh mavant.

O yeh hava, o yeh a yeh hava, o yeh hava, o yeh hava.

[42 : 33] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[45 : 03] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.