

The Blood That Speaks Better Things Than That of Abel

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[0 : 00] at verse 24, Hebrews 12 and at verse 24. We read there, to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

Now there are some things in life that you just cannot separate. They are so bound together. When you mention one, you mention the other. And that is most certainly true with regard to the Lord Jesus Christ.

When you mention Jesus, you inevitably have to mention the blood. Jesus and blood are inseparably bound. And sadly, there are many people that try and separate Jesus from the blood.

And they want to home in only on Jesus with regard to his care, his compassion, and his love. But it is by the blood and through the blood that we really come to understand his love, his care, and his compassion.

You cannot have Jesus without the blood as the mediator of this new covenant. And it is one thing that the Old Testament church was always reminded of was the blood.

[1 : 24] It was central to everything. There was always, always blood. And they were being made aware in a very visual, a very visible way that without the shedding of blood, there was no remission of sin.

And you couldn't go to either the temple or to the tabernacle without being reminded of that because there was always the blood. All the animal sacrifices, all the sacrifices were, of course, pointing to what Jesus was to do.

They were all, the whole system was set out in such a way that in a very powerful, graphic, visual way, there was this picture of what was to take place.

And it involved blood. And that's why we have that verse which tells us that without the shedding of blood, there was to be no remission of sin. Again, many of the great events in the Old Testament had blood.

Remember the Passover, where the angel of death was to pass over, was to go through the land of Egypt and to destroy every home, the firstborn in every home, except where the blood was found.

[2 : 32] And you remember how they had to put the blood on the doorposts and on the lintel. Again, the great day of atonement when the high priest, he would go in on this annual, this once in a year, into the Holy of Holies, and he would sprinkle the blood on the meshes seat.

Again, there was the covenant that was made at Sinai, where the blood was actually sprinkled upon the people. It was, again, one of these amazing days.

And that, we believe, is what was spoken of here in these verses just prior to this, about the mountain, that even if a beast touched the mountain, it was going to be stoned.

And it was a terrifying moment where a covenant was made with the people. And a covenant seemed to be, it was ratified with blood. And the blood was sprinkled on the people.

But here we talk about a new covenant. And this is the covenant that is made for us. And the great thing about this covenant is that the basis, the one who is the basis of the covenant is not us, but it is Jesus.

[3 : 41] He is. And how thankful we are for that. Because Jesus is the one who came to do for us what we couldn't do ourselves. And so he is the mediator of the new covenant.

Now, as you know, a mediator is somebody who is a go-between, between two parties that have fallen out. We often hear today about the whole area of mediation, and where people are trying to bring two, maybe two groups of people who have fallen out, two groups of people who are not speaking.

We often find it between a company and the union or whatever, and they're trying to find some common ground. And sometimes outside bodies are brought in to try and bring the two groups together.

And in a sense, that is what Jesus did, because there was a great breach between God and man. God had made man, but there was a great breach because of sin.

And it was a breach that couldn't be brought together, a breach that couldn't be bridged, except by God's intervention. And that's what God did.

[4 : 50] He sent Jesus. And that's why Jesus is called the mediator of the new covenant. That is why he came, to bring the two parties together, to bring God and man together.

And that's what Jesus has done. And he has done so by the blood. Always the blood. Now, our verse tells us that he's talking about the blood, but in this particular instance, it talks again about the sprinkling, and we think very likely it is speaking about that sprinkling of the blood upon the people.

But here is a new covenant. The old covenant, it couldn't be kept, because man couldn't keep it himself. Mankind doesn't have the ability to keep themselves.

But here is the new covenant, the one where Jesus is the foundation of it. But then it speaks here about the blood of Abel. And there's a kind of a contrast here between the blood of Abel and the blood of Jesus.

And it tells us that the blood of Jesus, really, that it speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. Now, of course, when we think of Abel, we think of the first martyr.

[6 : 03] He was the first person to die in this world. And it must have been a fearful moment in the experience of Adam and Eve when they saw their son Abel lying dead, because they had never seen anybody dead prior to this.

Adam and Eve had been made in perfection, and they were told they would go on in perfection, as long as they obeyed. If they disobeyed, the sentence of death was to come upon them.

God said to them, You eat of the fruit of that tree in the middle of the garden, and you will die. And the moment they disobeyed, sin entered and death came in its wake.

And here it must have been frightening, fearful for them, as they looked upon their son and saw him lying there, cold, stone dead, and realized, We brought, we brought that in upon ourselves.

And so this, of course, was the first, as we know, the first death. And you remember how on that particular occasion, Cain had killed Abel in a fit of jealous rage, because both Cain and Abel came to worship God.

[7 : 26] Cain wasn't an irreligious man. And sometimes people think that Cain didn't know God, and Cain had no interest in God. That wasn't the case. Cain came to worship God.

But Cain came his own way. And he decided to bring what he knew best about, which was the fruit of the ground. He was a gardener. Abel came by the God-given way.

Abel came by the way of the blood. He came by way of sacrifice, with the shedding of blood. And he was accepted by God, because he came in the correct way.

It is obvious that God had revealed the way from the very beginning. Cain didn't come. Cain came the bloodless way. Just as we said at the beginning, there are people who want to know about Jesus, but they don't want to know about Jesus in the blood.

Let's just follow the example. Let's just be good. Now, of course we're to be good. And Jesus is an example. Don't get me wrong. Peter makes it very clear that we are to follow, we are to look to Jesus as an example and to follow him.

[8 : 37] But it's got to be by the blood initially. This is how we come. This is where faith comes. It's believing in the sacrificed Christ, the Jesus who gave himself as a sacrifice for sin.

And if we lose sight of that, we lose sight of everything. But this is what Cain did. Cain came on his own, in his own way. And he came with the fruit of the ground.

And God didn't accept a sacrifice, because it wasn't by the God-appointed way. And Cain knew this, and he flew into this fit of jealousy.

And jealousy, we've mentioned this often enough before, jealousy and envy are horrendous monsters. And he went into this murderous rage. And as a result, he killed his brother.

And you know, that's, in a sense, it's the same reason that put Jesus onto the cross. It was this rage of envy.

[9 : 40] That's why Jesus ended on the cross. But you know, when you see Abel lying dead on the ground, and his blood spilt out, we remember that that blood actually has a voice.

Because remember when God dealt with Cain, God came to Cain, and God challenged Cain about his brother. Remember how Cain said, am I my brother's keeper?

And God said to him, your brother's blood, your brother's blood, is crying to me from the ground. The voice, that's what it says, the voice of your brother's blood, cries unto me from the ground.

So that spilled blood had a voice. So here we're seeing this contrast between the voice of Abel's blood, and the voice of Jesus' blood.

And just, there's many suggestions that we could make, but just four very brief ones. The blood of Jesus speaks of love, while the blood of Abel speaks of hatred.

[10 : 47] Now I know that we could look at this in loads of different ways. We could compare, we could contrast, we could take it in lots of different ways, but four just very simple things. The blood of Abel, as we said, lying on the ground there, spoke of hatred, of a brother, who absolutely lost it because of jealousy, and as we say, flew into this rage of hatred, and he killed his brother.

And as we said, envy is this great curse, and as we said, that is the reason why the Lord Jesus Christ was on the cross. As they pummeled, we've been looking at, we've been looking at the life of Jesus as we've been following through Luke.

And one of the things that, in these last two or three weeks, is where we've seen those in authority venting their spleen, so to speak, against Christ, where they were battering him, hitting him, so much so that he became disfigured.

And why were they doing that? Why did they so hate him? Because they were jealous of him. The Bible tells us it was because of envy that they delivered him up. So at one level, you can say there is a comparison between the blood of Abel and the blood of Jesus, because we could say there is hatred.

But it's because of this terrible hatred we see blood being spilled. But we know that the blood of Jesus is being spilled because of love.

[12 : 17] Jesus could have stopped, at any moment, the antagonism and the hatred. Jesus could have got up and walked away. Jesus could have called on twelve legions of angels to come and deliver him.

He said that to them. When Peter pulled out the sword to defend Jesus, Jesus said, no, put the sword away. Jesus was in control.

Even the nails that were hammered into the hands of Jesus, and he was put on the cross, and they below the cross were saying, he saved others himself, he cannot save. They didn't realize that was actually a truth.

If he was to save himself, then he couldn't save others. It wasn't the nails that were holding him on the cross. It was his love. His love to the Father. His love to us.

That's what held him there. That's where the commitment was. And we've got to remember that. That we have this Savior.

[13 : 18] This Savior who never, at any point, wavered from his commitment to saving us. It's an extraordinary thing.

When you think about it, I think we've mentioned before, when you think of the Father's love in sending his son, it must be the most awful thing, and I don't want to hurt anybody here, because I know people know themselves the pain of losing a child.

And I cannot think, and I pray that I won't know personally that pain. It must be the most awful thing. But you know, if you knew beforehand, if you knew from the time that that child was born, that at a particular date your child was to die, it would be a fearful thing to live with.

And as that date would approach, I think you would try everything in your power to try and prevent that from happening. Well, the thing is that the Father gave his son.

And there was an appointment all the time. And he knew. The Father at no point said, no, this is too much. I cannot put my son through this.

[14 : 46] I cannot give my son any more. I must stop this. No. All the time. All the time. He kept, without flinching at any moment, to the fulfillment of all that he had promised to do.

And Jesus, even although there was that moment in Gethsemane, when he saw something of the horror and the forsakenness and the abandonment and what, a little of what hell was going to mean, for him in his soul, he still says, to do thy will, I take delight.

So we see that the blood of Jesus speaks far better things than the blood of Abel. Again, the second thing is that the blood of Jesus speaks of peace and not of fear.

Abel's blood was a terrifying thing. When we mentioned already, Adam and Eve, they come out and they look and there's that brother's blood. Can you imagine the fear, the horror, the anguish, all that's within their heart as they look at that brother?

Can you think of the terror that would be in the heart of Cain? Although at first he's making this kind of, making light of it, it is still an awful thing. But you know, when you come and you see the blood of Jesus, it's different.

[16 : 08] Because the blood of Jesus speaks peace. Why? The blood of Jesus brings pardon and forgiveness into our heart. And you know, when you are pardoned and you are forgiven, the result is peace.

You know, when you've done something wrong to somebody and they are displeased with you and you know what you have done is wrong and it has grieved you in your heart what you have done is wrong and you know that they are justified in being angry against you and you know in fact that you may be punished because of what you've done for the person then to come and say to you, you're forgiven.

That's it. I'm not even going to, I'm not even going to remember it anymore. It's gone. It's as if you had never wronged me. Peace comes into your heart.

Your peace floods in and you think, oh, wow, that's great. I'm free. And that's what the blood of Jesus has done. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin and so as a result of the forgiveness and the pardon of sin, there is now peace.

You would imagine, just to take that picture in Egypt, you think of that night in Egypt when the angel of death is passing over. You could almost imagine people going out and making sure the blood, is the blood on the doorpost, is the blood on the lid, I must go and see.

[17 : 46] There it is. And you say, I can sit at peace because I know because as I look on that blood, the angel is going to pass by, pass over.

And that's what happened. And that's what, what the blood of Jesus has done. You see, when man sinned in the garden, what did Adam do? What was Adam's response?

It was to run away. Fear makes a person run. You know when you were a youngster and you, sometimes when you would get up to mischief and do something wrong, what did you do?

You ran away. Always running away in case you would be caught. And that's what Adam did. He ran away because of the fear that was in his heart.

But God came after Adam and he said, Adam, where are you? God came after Adam in love and in mercy and gave the great promise, the great promise of his son.

[18 : 52] And this son has now shed his blood in order that we don't have to run, but in order that we may experience peace. Third thing is that the blood of Abel, it spoke of division, it spoke of separation, while the blood of Jesus speaks of union.

You see, that's what happened when Cain killed his brother. Straight away, there was division within the family. There was separation, death. And it affected Cain, big style, because remember how God came to Cain and, excuse me, Cain was made a fugitive, a wanderer, a vagabond.

God sent him away. You see, there was fearful division in that home, in that family. Cain suffered. You remember what Cain said, my punishment, he said, is greater than I can bear.

That, my friends, is the result of sin. It is the eternal result of sin. That is what every person who dies without Christ will say, my punishment is greater than I can bear.

It's an awesome, fearful prospect. But the words that Cain echoed, the words that Cain said, echoed throughout eternity. My punishment is greater than I can bear.

[20 : 19] So will every soul say. That does not find union through the blood of Jesus. And that's what Jesus came to bring.

The blood, this blood that was shed. You who were once far away have now, you were distanced, we were distanced, we were away. But we've been brought near by the blood of Jesus Christ.

It hasn't only happened in legal terms, but it has happened in experience. We are brought near, yes, legally, but we're also brought near within our heart.

We know it. We know it. Yes, the Bible tells us we know it from the written word, but we also know it within our heart. There is now no separation.

And finally, the blood of Jesus speaks of life, while the blood of Abel speaks of death. That's what Jesus' death brings.

[21 : 25] It brings life. It's a wonderful thing, life. Life. Yes, we have to go through, we have to go through the process of death, but it's death that results in life.

You know, when Christ gave that great shout on the cross, it is finished. The fearsome terror of death was broken. It's finished. That is why the believer is able to look at death and say, oh, death, where is your sting?

that is why the believer, you know, you could walk down tomorrow or someday and go to the cemetery and look at where you may lie.

And you know, there is, we often talk about the finality of the grave and there is a great sense of finality when the earth is put back in and the turf rolled over, but it's only temporary.

It's just like, in a sense, going to bed at night and pulling the bedclothes up because there's going to be a morning, a resurrection morning. And Jesus is proof of that because Jesus' death and his blood brought life.

[22 : 39] And that's a great hope. That's, this is all part of why we today are remembering and going to celebrate the Lord's Supper. Christ died a fearful death in order that we may have life and live.

So it's little wonder that the word says here that the blood of Jesus, that the blood, that it speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

Are you today trusting in that blood? Are you sheltering under that blood? Have you come to put your hope, your trust, your everything in Christ?

Let us pray. Lord our God, we give thanks for this word and we pray that we may be blessed and encouraged by it.

Oh, we pray to open our hearts so that we may receive Jesus more and more. May the power of thy spirit work within our hearts and may the light and the love and the manifest itself in such a way that we are conscious that the Lord is our God.

[23 : 53] bless us and we pray continue with us and take away our sin in Jesus' name we ask it. Amen.