

THE DOCTRINE OF THE BLOOD COVENANT

TEXT: (Hebrews 9:11-22, NLT)

¹¹ So Christ has now become the High Priest over all the good things that have come. He has entered that greater, more perfect Tabernacle in heaven, which was not made by human hands and is not part of this created world. ¹² With his own blood—not the blood of goats and calves—he entered the Most Holy Place once for all time and secured our redemption forever.

¹³ Under the old system, the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer could cleanse people's bodies from ceremonial impurity. ¹⁴ Just think how much more the blood of Christ will purify our consciences from sinful deeds so that we can worship the living God. For by the power of the eternal Spirit, Christ offered himself to God as a perfect sacrifice for our sins. ¹⁵ That is why he is the one who mediates a new covenant between God and people, so that all who are called can receive the eternal inheritance God has promised them. For Christ died to set them free from the penalty of the sins they had committed under that first covenant.

¹⁶ Now when someone leaves a will, it is necessary to prove that the person who made it is dead. ¹⁷ The will goes into effect only after the person's death. While the person who made it is still alive, the will cannot be put into effect.

¹⁸ That is why even the first covenant was put into effect with the blood of an animal. ¹⁹ For after Moses had read each of God's commandments to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, along with water, and sprinkled both the book of God's law and all the people, using hyssop branches and scarlet wool. ²⁰ Then he said, "This blood confirms the covenant God has made with you." ²¹ And in the same way, he sprinkled blood on the Tabernacle and on everything used for worship. ²² In fact, according to the law of Moses, nearly everything was purified with blood. For without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness.

INTRODUCTION:

1. "What can wash away my sins?

Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

What can make me whole again?

Nothing but the blood of Jesus" (Robert Lowry)

2. Under the Law, "almost all things were cleansed by blood," but there were a few exceptions.

3. If you were impoverished.
 - a. "If, however, he cannot afford two doves or two young pigeons, he is to bring as an offering for his sin a tenth of an ephah of fine flour for a sin offering. He must not put oil or incense on it, because it is a sin offering" (Leviticus 5:11, NIV).
4. In Numbers 31:22, metal objects captured in war were to be purified by fire and "the water of cleansing" (NIV).
5. Objects that could not withstand the fire were simply to be purified by the "water of cleansing." (See Numbers 31:23)
6. There were exceptions to the use of blood for cleansing, but not when it comes to remission, or forgiveness, of sins.
 - a. "In fact, according to the law of Moses, nearly everything was purified with blood. For without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness" (Hebrews 9:22, NLT).
7. The lesson this morning will compare the superiority of the Great High Priest to the Aaronic priesthood, the blood of Christ to that of animals, and the New Covenant to the Old Covenant.

I. THE SUPERIORITY OF THE GREAT HIGH PRIEST

1. The writer of Hebrews describes Jesus Christ as the Great High Priest, and as such, the mediator of a new blood covenant.
 - a. "So Christ has now become the High Priest over all the good things that have come. He has entered that greater, more perfect Tabernacle in heaven, which was not made by human hands and is not part of this created world" (Hebrews 9:11, NLT).
2. Within this verse are two very important items that are superior to that which they replaced.
 - a. The first item is the tabernacle; the second is the high priest.

A. The Tabernacle

1. Blood was central to the tabernacle worship.

2. Blood was shed in front of the brazen altar and carried all the way through the tabernacle to the mercy seat in the Most Holy Place.
 - a. "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" (Leviticus 17:11, NIV).
3. The earthly tabernacle was constructed in such a manner as to represent a much greater tabernacle.
 - a. "They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: 'See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain'" (Hebrews 8:5, NIV).
4. Under the New Covenant we learn of a "greater and more perfect" tabernacle.
 - a. Truly, it is greater and more perfect because it was not made with human hands; it is eternal and will never be corrupted by age.
5. Therefore, we can rest assured that the blood that was shed on Calvary has not coagulated or dried.
 - a. It flows just as freely today as it did the day our Savior hung upon the cross.
 - b. "I see a crimson stream of blood.
It flows from Calvary,
Its waves which reach the throne of God,
Are sweeping over me" (G. T. Haywood).

B. The Role of the High Priest

- a. There are at least six very specific points concerning the role of the Aaronic high priest that apply to Jesus' role as the Great High Priest.
1. The high priest was selected from among men (Hebrews 5:1).
 - a. In order to be our Great High Priest, Jesus Christ had to be fully man.
 - b. "For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people" (Hebrews 2:17, NIV).
 2. The high priest was appointed to represent men in matters pertaining to God (Hebrews 5:1).

- a. By filling the office of the Great High Priest, Jesus became a mediator between God and man.
 - b. "For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (I Timothy 2:5, NIV).
3. The high priest was appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices (Hebrews 8:3).
- a. Though he had many duties, the most important duty of the high priest was to serve in the tabernacle on the Day of Atonement by offering gifts and sacrifices.
 - b. It was on that day that he would carry the blood of the sin offering behind the veil and offer it on the mercy seat.
 - c. As the Great High Priest, Jesus carried the evidence of His shed blood behind the veil into the Most Holy Place (heaven itself) providing evidence of atonement for all mankind once and for all.
 - d. "With his own blood—not the blood of goats and calves—he entered the Most Holy Place once for all time and secured our redemption forever" (Hebrews 9:12, NLT).
 - e. Nothing but His blood would accomplish remission of sins.
4. The high priest was required to have something to offer (Hebrews 8:3).
- a. The Great High Priest entered the holy place with the ultimate sacrifice—the scars and His own shed blood as evidence.
 - b. "Just think how much more the blood of Christ will purify our consciences from sinful deeds so that we can worship the living God. For by the power of the eternal Spirit, Christ offered himself to God as a perfect sacrifice for our sins" (Hebrews 9:14, NLT).
5. The high priest had to be able to deal gently with those who were ignorant and going astray (Hebrews 5:2).
- a. We are assured that our Great High priest is able to do the same.
 - b. "Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted" (Hebrews 2:18, NIV).
6. As a man, the high priest was subject to the weakness of the flesh (Hebrews 5:3).
- a. It is at this point that we find both a comparison and a contrast.

- b. Because of this weakness, the descendents of Aaron who served in the role of the high priest were all sinners, and first had to make a sacrifice for their own sins.
- c. Only then could they offer sacrifices for the nation of Israel.
- d. Similarly, Jesus was subject to the weakness of the flesh, or else the temptations would have been meaningless.
- e. Yet, throughout his lifetime the Great High Priest did not yield to the weakness in the flesh, and so he had no need to make an offering for Himself.
- f. "This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin" (Hebrews 4:15, NLT).

II. THE SUPERIORITY OF THE BLOOD OF CHRIST

- 1. The blood of bulls and goats satisfied the requirements of the first covenant, making the individual ceremonially clean.
- 2. However, Christ carried the blood of the perfect sacrifice into the perfect tabernacle not only to meet the demands of the law but also to purge men's consciences of sinfulness.
 - a. "With his own blood—not the blood of goats and calves—he entered the Most Holy Place once for all time and secured our redemption forever.

Under the old system, the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer could cleanse people's bodies from ceremonial impurity. Just think how much more the blood of Christ will purify our consciences from sinful deeds so that we can worship the living God. For by the power of the eternal Spirit, Christ offered himself to God as a perfect sacrifice for our sins. (Hebrews 9:12-14, NLT).

A. Obtaining Eternal Redemption

- 1. The first great act of our Lord's ministry as the Great High Priest was the "obtaining eternal redemption for his people."
 - a. "In whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins" (Colossians 1:14, NIV).
 - b. "The blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin" (1 John 1:7, NIV).

2. Because of who He was and what He did—"who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God"—He was able to shed His blood for our sins and yet live eternally.
3. "He paid a debt He did not owe.
I owed a debt I could not pay.
I needed someone to wash my sins away,
And now I sing a brand new song—Amazing Grace.
Christ Jesus paid that I could never pay" (Anonymous).

B. Entering into the Holy Place

1. The second great act of our Lord's ministry as the Great High Priest was entering into the Most Holy Place.
2. When the high priest on that great Day of Atonement completed the sacrifice, he entered into the Most Holy Place with the blood of the atonement, to present before the LORD evidence of having met the requirements of the Law and to make intercession for his people.
3. When Jesus, as the Great High Priest, completed the work of atonement outside the Most Holy Place, he reentered the tabernacle—heaven itself, and presented the evidence of having met the requirements of the Law for the sin for all mankind.
 - a. "With his own blood—not the blood of goats and calves—he entered the Most Holy Place once for all time and secured our redemption forever" (Hebrews 9:12, NLT).
4. Luke described the beginning of that great historical event.
 - a. "When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven" (Luke 24:50-51, NIV).
 - b. "After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight" (Acts 1:9, NIV).
5. What happened after he disappeared from sight that day, Luke does not tell us, however the spirit of prophecy gives us insight.
 - a. "God has ascended amid shouts of joy, the LORD amid the sounding of trumpets" (Psalm 47:5, NIV).

- b. "The chariots of God are tens of thousands and thousands of thousands; the Lord has come from Sinai into his sanctuary. When you ascended on high, you led captives in your train; you received gifts from men, even from the rebellious—that you, O LORD God, might dwell there" (Psalm 68:17-18, NIV).
6. That day, amidst the sounding of trumpets and resounding worship of an angelic host, the Great High Priest made his way through the dimly lit cavern to the throne of God and presented evidence that the price had been paid.
 - a. "It is finished!"
 7. After sprinkling blood upon the mercy seat, the priest would leave the Most Holy Place.
 8. In contrast, because of the superiority of the blood of Christ, our Great High Priest remains in the Most Holy Place always ready to make intercession for us.
 - a. "Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them" (Hebrews 7:25, NIV).
 - b. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9, NIV).
 9. The One who never slumbers or sleeps remains on duty in that Most Holy Place to intercede for us and to provide evidence that the requirements of the Law had been met for our sins.

C. A Clean Conscience

1. "Under the old system, the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer could cleanse people's bodies from ceremonial impurity. Just think how much more the blood of Christ will purify our consciences from sinful deeds so that we can worship the living God. For by the power of the eternal Spirit, Christ offered himself to God as a perfect sacrifice for our sins" (Hebrews 9:13-14, NLT).
2. Throughout the time of the Law a veil remained between God and man.
3. As a result of Jesus' sacrificial death, the veil of the temple has been rent and man can now go directly into the presence of God.
 - a. "Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need" (Hebrews 4:16, NIV).

- b. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:18, KJV).
- 4. As in the Old Testament, men are still sinners.
- 5. However, the superiority of the blood of Christ brought in a doctrine unknown in the Old Testament—justification.
 - a. "Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!" (Romans 5:9, NIV).
- 6. As a result we can put great emphasis on the verb "were."
 - a. "Don't you realize that those who do wrong will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Don't fool yourselves. Those who indulge in sexual sin, or who worship idols, or commit adultery, or are male prostitutes, or practice homosexuality, or are thieves, or greedy people, or drunkards, or are abusive, or cheat people—none of these will inherit the Kingdom of God. Some of you were once like that. But you were cleansed; you were made holy; you were made right with God by calling on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Corinthians 6:9-11, NLT).
 - b. Someone described justification as "just-as-if-you-had-never-sinned."

III. THE SUPERIORITY OF THE NEW COVENANT

- 1. God has established a number of covenants with mankind throughout history, and all were bound by blood.
 - a. "That is why he is the one who mediates a new covenant between God and people, so that all who are called can receive the eternal inheritance God has promised them. For Christ died to set them free from the penalty of the sins they had committed under that first covenant" (Hebrews 9:15, NLT).
- 2. Because the blood of Christ satisfied the demands of the Law, Jesus was in a position to mediate a new covenant—a covenant that would set men free from the sins they continually committed under the old covenant.

A. The Mediator of a New Blood Covenant

- 1. The Greek word rendered "mediator" literally means "a go-between."

- a. "For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (I Timothy 2:5, NIV).
2. Jesus mediated between the wrath of God depicted by the cherubim with flaming swords and the need of sinful man who dared not look upon the face of God.
3. For four thousand years there was a continuous flow of blood.
4. Thousands of animals were sacrificed.
5. Each one represented the attempt of man to reenter the Garden of Eden and partake of the tree of life, hoping to live forever.
6. As each animal went bleating and crying to its death, it declared that the way to the tree of life was still guarded by the cherubim.
7. God would not allow sinful man to partake of the tree of life and thus live forever in a sinful state.
8. However, one day a Lamb was slain that did not remain dead.
 - a. Jesus Christ became the victim of the flaming sword, satisfying the demand of the Law.
9. He conquered death and rose to partake of the tree of life, and by doing so paved the way for His brethren.
 - a. "But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive" (I Corinthians 15:20-22, NIV).
 - b. "He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world" (I John 2:2, NIV).

B. The Benefits of the New Blood Covenant

1. When Satan, the accuser of the brethren, comes along and falsely accuses you of past sins that have been remitted as a result of the shed blood of Christ, you can simply turn to the scriptures that declare you clean and proclaim, "NOT GUILTY!"
 - a. "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God" (Romans 5:1-2).

2. For the first time, the inner sanctuary was no longer the domain of the priesthood, but everyone was welcome in the presence of God.
 - a. "Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need" (Hebrews 4:18, NIV).
3. We now have access to God as a direct result of the New Covenant.
 - a. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Romans 5:1-2, KJV).
 - b. "Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory" (Romans 8:17, NIV).
4. No longer do we have to hide our face from God, but because sin no longer remains in our conscience, we can enter into the presence of God with freedom and confidence.

CONCLUSION

1. "For without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness" (Hebrews 9:22, NLT).
2. Nothing but the blood of Christ can remit sins.
3. But how do we receive the benefit of the blood of Christ?
4. How do we enter into a covenant relationship with Jesus?
5. G. T. Haywood penned those beautiful words:
 - a. "The water, Spirit, and the blood agree if we but understood in making sinners pure and good. He took my sins away. Thank God for the blood."
6. Years before G. T. Haywood penned those beautiful words, the Apostle John wrote:
 - a. "Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

This is the one who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three that testify: the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement" (1 John 5:5-8, NIV).

7. And when those listening to Peter in Acts 2 asked what they must do to remedy their lost situation, Peter told them they needed the blood, the water, and the Spirit.
 - a. “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven. And you will receive the gift of the Holy spirit” (Acts 2:38, NIV 1973)