

eating meat that has its lifeblood still in it. The Creator of all life speaks as though there is an intimate relationship between “life” and “blood.” Even a limited scientific understanding of animal and human life confirms this is true.

Interestingly, the command not to eat meat containing its lifeblood is repeated 11 more times in the portion of the Bible Christians call the Old Testament. Apparently, God is very serious about this command. **But why?**

God designed blood not only with a **NATURAL** purpose, but also with a **SPIRITUAL** purpose.

Many years after God spoke to Noah about blood, He revealed blood's spiritual purpose to Moses and the Israelites:

“Any Israelite or any alien living among them who eats any blood—I will set my face against that person who eats blood and will cut him off from his people. 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. Therefore I say to the Israelites, none of you may eat blood, nor may an alien living among you eat blood.” (Leviticus 17:10-12)

God was so serious about the command not to eat blood that He said He would set His face against the person who eats blood and cut him off from his people. To have God oppose you in this way should be a very fearful thing!

We also learn here why God created blood-dependent creatures in the first place. God created blood-dependent creatures specifically for the spiritual purpose of making atonement: ***“It is the blood that makes atonement for one's life.”***

What is **ATONEMENT**? Atonement has to do with being made acceptable to God. All human beings sin against God. Because God is Holy and Righteous, He is greatly offended by that sin. Were He not to restrain His wrath, we would be consumed. But God is also merciful and has made a way to atone for sin. The method given by God in the Old Testament to

atone for sin was the shedding of an animal's blood.

It is especially important to note in Leviticus 17 that ***“it is the blood that makes atonement for one's LIFE.”*** It does not sound as though we need to make up for only a few sins in our lives. Rather, our entire LIVES need to be atoned for. We need a thorough cleansing.

Notice the connection between the animal's blood and your life. The animal's blood is spilled in exchange for your life. He dies as a substitute for you. God allows his blood to represent your life. The shedding of his blood is for your atonement.

What did this look like in practice for Old Testament Israel? Whenever Israel followed the rules laid down by God, there was the perpetual slaying of animals and shedding of blood. Thousands upon thousands of animals were slain. And with every sacrifice there was the knowledge that the shed blood was not to be taken lightly, but that the shed blood was for the atonement of their lives.

But could the shedding of animal blood fully atone for their lives? Could it actually take away their sins forever? The New Testament provides a very clear answer. It informs us that all those thousands of sacrifices were actually just pictures of the one perfect sacrifice that would make perfect atonement and deal once for all with sin.

When Jesus came on the scene and began his public ministry, the prophet John the Baptist saw him and said these stirring words:

“Behold the lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29)

After performing many miracles that showed He was from God, and after much teaching of His disciples, Jesus came to the point in His life when he began to tell His disciples where things were headed:

From that time on Jesus began to explain to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests, and

teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. (Matthew 16:21)

Jesus also made clear that His being killed was part of God's plan:

“The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life – only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again.” (John 10:17-18)

And Jesus made clear that His death fulfilled God's purpose:

Speaking about Himself, Jesus said, “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.” (Matthew 20:28)

And then, the night before Jesus died, He stood in the midst of His disciples and lifted up a drink made from the fruit of the vine and said:

“This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.” (Matthew 26:28)

Remarking on the events of the next day when Jesus actually died and shed His own blood, the writer of the New Testament book of Romans says,

God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement. (Romans 3:25)

The writer of the New Testament book of Hebrews beautifully explains the relationship between Jesus' sacrifice and all those animal sacrifices in the Old Testament:

Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. (Hebrews 9:22)

It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. (Heb. 10:4)

The law [the Old Testament] is only a shadow of the good things that are coming – not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make

perfect those who draw near to worship.
(Hebrews 10:1-2)

However, the book of Hebrews further states:

Jesus did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption.
(Hebrews 9:12)

For Christ did not enter a man made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. (Hebrews 9:24-28)

Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when this priest [Jesus] had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God. (Hebrews 10:11-12)

Thousands and thousands of animal sacrifices were pictures of the perpetual need of forgiveness due to the impossibility of man living up to the righteous standard of God. But they were also pictures of the perfect sacrifice of the Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, who would shed His own blood as a substitute for all who place their trust firmly in Him.

From beginning to end the Bible has BLOOD as a major theme. The last book in the Bible tells us why. In a prophecy about the end times

we learn that a great beast will be given power over all the earth. That beast is Antichrist.

All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast – all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the lamb that was slain from the creation of the world. (Revelation 13:8)

This means that the slaying of Jesus, the Lamb of God, was in the mind of God before Jesus came into the world, before Moses gave the sacrificial system to Israel, before God told Noah not to eat meat containing its lifeblood, even before God created anything at all. The shedding of Jesus' blood to make atonement for us to the glory of God is the theme of the Bible and of all history.

Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. (1 Peter 3:18)

The question is this: are you trusting in His perfect sacrifice for your sins? Or, do you still trust in your own goodness and your own sacrifices? Before answering that question, consider this warning from the book of Hebrews:

Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? (Hebrews 10:28-29)

May God grant you grace to see His purpose in history for the sacrifice of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ! May you trust in Jesus, who shed His blood and rose again from the dead 3 days later in order to bring you to God! Trust in Him fully, because truly, **LIFE IS IN THE BLOOD!**

LIFE is in the BLOOD

Have you ever thought about how important blood is to life?

Blood is essential to both human and animal life. If just one of these critical functions of blood were to fail, death would soon follow. Blood . . .

- Carries oxygen from your lungs to cells throughout your body,
- Transports glucose from your digestive tract throughout your body to be used as fuel by your cells,
- Simultaneously delivers insulin from your pancreas to enable your cells to use the glucose,
- Distributes minerals, hormones, and other chemicals wherever they are needed in the body,
- Removes carbon dioxide and other waste products from your cells, so that they can be eliminated from your body.

Truly, blood is critical to sustain animal and human life.

As a scientist who loves to study the Bible, I find it noteworthy that the Bible has a lot to say about blood. One of the earliest references to blood in the Bible occurs just after the great flood in Noah's day. God speaks to Noah and for the first time gives mankind permission to eat meat:

“Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything. But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it.” (Genesis 9:3-4)

In this very early reference, God prohibits