

BLOOD

In the King James version the word blood appears 447 times in 375 different verses. Let us consider what the Bible has to say about this important subject.

THE LIFE OF THE FLESH IS IN THE BLOOD (LEV. 17:11 KJV)

As you know God formed man out of the dust of the earth and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul (Gen. 2:7). The principle source of man's physical life was blood. If he cut himself he could bleed to death. If a clot prevented blood from flowing to any part of his body it would shrivel and die. If his heart stopped pumping blood he would also die. It is literally true that the life of our flesh is in man's blood!

Here are some remarkable facts about blood taken from an article by J. D. Ratcliff in an old issue of in *Today's Health*:

- The circulatory system of the human body is estimated to be from 60,000 – 100,000 miles long. This is longer than any U.S. railroad.
- The blood circulates through the system at approximately 5 quarts per minute or 7,200 quarts every 24 hours.
- Arteries relax as the heart beats and contract in between beats, thus supplying the tiniest branches of this system with a smooth supply of life giving blood.
- There are 6 to 7 quarts of blood in the average adult, containing 30 trillion minute discs, or red cells. These red cells are born and destroyed at the stupendous rate of 72 million per minute. As they are destroyed, however, the body salvages 85 % of their vital iron which is returned to the bone marrow for the manufacture of new hemoglobin. Without this ability to preserve iron we would all die of anemia.
- There is approximately a quart of oxygen circulating in your blood at all times. In the lungs the hemoglobin in your blood gives up carbon dioxide and soaks up oxygen. In the cells of your body the reverse takes place, it gives off oxygen and takes on carbon dioxide.
- Capillaries are microscopic junction points between arteries and veins. They are so small that real blood cells must pass through them in single file. Capillary walls are thought to be porous allowing oxygen and nourishment to pass through to the body and carbon dioxide and wastes to flow back through to the blood.
- The kidneys are elaborate filtering devices containing 64 miles of piping. Every 24 hours the kidneys separate 180 quarts of filtrate from the blood. Two quarts of urea and ammonia are extracted and the other 178 quarts of purified blood are returned to the system.
- The speed of the blood flowing through our body is controlled by the vasomotor center in the base of the brain. Blood flows slowly when we are resting or sleeping, but during periods of strenuous activity the flow of blood must be increased to supply extra energy and dispose of extra waste.
- Blood contains an array of proteins, each with a specific function. One carries iodine for the thyroid glands, another carries phosphorus for the teeth, the third carries calcium for the bones.
- The liver is the blood's master regulatory organ. It is the liver's job to see that blood contains at all times the exact amount of sugar needed by muscles and the precise amount of amino acids

required for tissue building and repair. When you have eaten too much the liver must store what it can and destroy the rest. A reserve supply of aminos and glycogen is kept on hand for emergencies.

- When a person dies their arteries empty themselves. Ancient anatomists discovered this and thought them to be air passages, hence the word “artery” which is derived from the Latin word for “windpipe”. It was not until 1628 that William Harvey, the great English physician, announced his discovery of the circulation of blood. Some feel the circulation of blood is mentioned in the Bible (Eccl. 12:6).
- As you can plainly see, the life of our flesh is literally in our blood!

SHEDDING INNOCENT BLOOD

Shedding blood is an expression used in the Bible for killing someone. Prov. 6:17 states that God hates hands that shed innocent blood. God was not happy, therefore, when Cain killed Abel his brother. In fact God told Cain: **“Listen! Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground” (Gen. 4:10)**. This verse speaks volumes regarding the significance that blood has with God.

- Joseph’s brothers decided not to shed his blood and threw him into a cistern (Gen. 37:22).
- Joab killed Abner to avenge his brother’s blood (2 Sam. 3:26,27).
- Joab also killed Amasa leaving him to wallow in his own blood (2 Sam. 20:9-13).
- David advised Solomon to have Joab executed because he had killed two commanders of Israel’s army in time of peace and stained his belt and sandals with their blood (1 Ki. 2:5-7).
- Wicked King Ahab killed an innocent man named Naboth so he could have his vineyard. Elijah predicted that in the place where the dogs licked the blood of Naboth they would also lick the blood of Ahab (1 Ki. 21:17-19). That prophecy, of course, came true.
- The Hebrews were condemned for shedding innocent blood by offering their sons and daughters to demons (Ps. 106:36-38).
- Isaiah also condemned those whose feet were swift to shed innocent blood (Is. 59:7).
- Jeremiah also condemned those who shed the blood of the innocent (Jer. 19:4).
- Ezekiel condemned Jerusalem for shedding blood and making idols (Ez. 22:1-5).
- Hosea condemned Gilead as a city of evildoers with footprints of blood (Hos. 6:8).
- Joel condemned Egypt and Edom for shedding innocent blood (Joel 3:19).
- Nahum condemned Nineveh as a city of blood and full of lies (Nahum 3:1).
- Habakkuk condemned those who would build a city on bloodshed and injustice (Hab. 2:12).
- Jesus said that God would bring upon Jerusalem all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood Zechariah son of Berekiah, whom they had murdered between the temple and the altar (Matt. 23:35).

BLOOD SACRIFICES

After Adam and Eve had sinned their eyes were opened and they realized that they were naked. Therefore they sewed fig leaves together to make coverings for themselves (Gen. 3:7). This was not an appropriate covering in the eyes of God so **“The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and**

his wife and clothed them” (Gen. 3:21). It would appear, therefore, that the first animal sacrifices were performed by God Himself. The concept of God providing a “covering” for sinful man is significant. God’s “covering” was an integral part of Hebrew worship. The Day of Atonement, for example, is also known as Yom Kippur. The Hebrew word “Yom” means “day” and “Kippur” means “covering”. This special day was therefore, “the day of the covering”. It was on this day that the High Priest entered into the Holy of Holies and sprinkled blood on the “covering” of the ark. This “covering” was also known as the “mercy seat” (Lev. 16:1-34).

When Cain and Abel brought offerings to the Lord, the Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering but not on Cain and his offering (Gen. 4:1-7). Cain brought “some of the fruits of the soil” but Abel brought “fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock”. Abel obviously brought a blood sacrifice. The book of Hebrews reminds us that **“By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did” (Heb. 11:4).** Since faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Rom. 10:17), we are led to assume that Abel obeyed God and made a blood sacrifice and Cain didn’t obey God.

It seems safe to assume that blood sacrifices were an integral part of worship during the days before the flood. Remember that God told Noah to take “seven of every kind of clean animal” and “two of every kind of unclean animal” into the ark (Gen. 7:1-4). If blood sacrifices were not being made these instructions would be meaningless. We know for certain that when Noah came out of the ark the first thing he did was build an altar and sacrifice clean animals as burnt offerings unto the Lord (Gen. 8:20).

After the flood God gave Noah new instructions regarding blood. Remember that before the flood man could only eat plants (Gen. 1:29). Now, however, God told Noah: **“Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you green plants, I now give you everything” (Gen. 9:3).** It is significant to note, however, that while Noah could eat animals, he was forbidden to eat anything with its lifeblood still in it: **“But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it” (Gen. 9:4).** This prohibition was included in the Mosaic Law and still remains to this day. The Jerusalem Council concluded that only four things carried over in to the Christian dispensation from previous law: **“You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality” (Acts 15:29).** It is impossible to read the Bible without realizing that blood is important to God.

Capital punishment was not listed in these four prohibitions as it had apparently been universally accepted since the days of Noah. As you know, God told Noah: **“Whoever shed the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man” (Gen. 9:6).** As Paul wrote to the Romans, civil government does not bear the sword in vain (Rom. 13:1-7).

BLOOD SACRIFICES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

Anthropologists have discovered blood sacrifices among people all over the world. This leads historians to question how and when this practice originated, and how it came to be diffused throughout the world? It seems that killing an innocent victim would add to one’s guilt rather than diminish it. Yet, contrary to human philosophy, blood sacrifices are common in the history of people all over the world.

Dr. Duane Gish in his book *Dinosaurs by Design* provides a clue. He has found 270 different people groups with legends of a world wide flood. The universality of these legends is easily explained by those who believe the Bible. Since the Bible teaches that all mankind descended from Noah, it is easy to explain why all people groups would have flood legends in their history. The same factors would also explain the universality of blood sacrifices. The way the family of Noah was dispersed is recorded in Genesis 10 and is called "The Table of Nations".

Based on a careful reading of Genesis, Noah and his family were in the ark 1 year and 17 days. It must have made a profound impression on Shem, Ham, and Japheth when Noah immediately built an altar and made blood sacrifices after coming out of the ark. Noah's sons had fed and cared for those animals for over a year. Further, the animals were few in number and their survival would be important to repopulate the earth. Yet Noah sacrificed them just the same. Such an important memory would not easily be forgotten. As we have said, this would easily explain how blood sacrifices became a part of human history.

BLOOD SACRIFICES MADE BY JOB AND ABRAHAM

Some feel that the book of Job is the oldest book in the Bible. Be that as it may, it is certainly a very old book and describes life long before the age of Moses. Please note Job's continual practice of making blood sacrifices: **"He (Job) was the greatest man among all the people of the East. His sons used to hold feasts in their homes on their birthdays, and they would invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. When a period of feasting had run its course, Job would make arrangements for them to be purified. Early in the morning he would sacrifice a burnt offering for each of them, thinking, 'Perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.' This was Job's regular custom"** (Job 1:3-5).

Abraham too lived long before the age of Moses, yet we are told that he obeyed God's requirements, commands, decrees, and laws (Gen. 26:7). It seems that these requirements, commands, decrees, and laws involved making blood sacrifices as Abraham was constantly building altars and making sacrifices (see Gen. 12:7,8; 13:4,18; etc.) When God wanted to assure Abram that he would have a son and possess the Promised Land, **"the Lord said to him, 'Bring me a heifer, a goat and a ram, each three years old, along with a dove and a young pigeon.' Abram brought all these to him, cut them in two and arranged the halves opposite each other; the birds, however, he did not cut in half. Then birds of prey came down on the carcasses, but Abram drove them away."** (Gen. 15:9-11).

Blood sacrifices were therefore a part of keeping God's requirements, commands, and decrees before the Law of Moses.

THE IMPORTANCE OF BLOOD IN THE LAW OF MOSES

"In the case of a will, it is necessary to prove the death of the one who made it, because a will is in force only when somebody has died; it never takes effect while the one who made it is living. This is why even the first covenant was not put into effect without blood. When Moses had proclaimed every command of the law to all the people, he took the blood of calves, together with

water, scarlet wool and branches of hyssop, and sprinkled the scroll and all the people. He said, ‘This is the blood of the covenant, which God has commanded you to keep.’ In the same way, he sprinkled with the blood both the tabernacle and everything used in its ceremonies. In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.” (Heb. 9:16-22).

- On the way to Egypt Zipporah, the wife of Moses, circumcised their son, touched the feet of Moses with the foreskin, and called him a bridegroom of blood (Ex. 4:25).
- The first plague God sent upon Egypt was to turn the waters of the Nile into blood (Ex. 7:17).
- The tenth and last plague also involved blood. In order to preserve the life of their firstborn the Hebrews had to slay a Passover lamb and put its blood on the sides and tops of the door frames of their homes. The Lord promised that when He saw the blood he would “pass over” that house (Ex. 12:1-13).
- Moses sprinkled blood on the altar and on the people (Ex. 24:6,8).
- Blood was also put on the horns of the altar (Ex. 29:12).
- Blood was also to be splashed on the sides of the altar (Lev. 1:5).
- Blood was to be sprinkled 7 times before the curtain of the sanctuary (Lev. 4:6).
- When Aaron was set apart as high priest blood was put on the lobe of his right ear, the thumb of his right hand, and the big toe of his right foot (Lev. 8:23).
- Blood was an integral part of the rituals performed by the high priest on the Day of Atonement (See Lev. 16).
- These Scriptures, of course, can easily be multiplied. The point is that blood has always played a significant part in the plan of God for His people and it certainly did so under Mosaic Law.

THE BLOOD OF JESUS

“Since you call on a Father who judges each person’s work impartially, live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear. For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.” (I Pet. 1:17-21)

- This Scripture emphasizes that before the creation of the world God determined to save mankind through the precious blood of Jesus.
- Jesus was therefore, in a sense, “slain from the creation of the world” (Rev. 13:8).
- The importance of this “one sacrifice” cannot be over emphasized **“because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy” (Heb. 10:14).**
- No animal sacrifice actually took away sin **“because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin” (Heb. 10:4).**
- Therefore when Jesus died, **“He died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant” (Heb. 9:15).**

- This one sacrifice not only atoned for sins in the past but also for sins in the future. Jewish priests offered sacrifices again and again that could never take away sin, but Jesus offered Himself as one sacrifice for sins for all time and then sat down on the right hand of God (Heb. 10:11,12).
- The Bible word describing God’s eternal plan is “mystery”. The prophets who spoke about this eternal mystery searched diligently to understand it, but were not able. Even the angels tried to understand this mystery but could not (1 Pet. 1:10-12).
- Neither did the rulers of this world understand the mystery, if they did they would not have crucified the Lord of glory (I Cor. 2:7-10).
- That “mystery” involved the salvation of man through the precious blood of Jesus!
- Jesus did not enter a man made sanctuary with the blood of bulls and goats, but He entered into heaven itself with His own blood to appear in the presence of God for us (Heb. 9:24).
- Paul explained to the Ephesians that this mystery was made known unto him by revelation. He further explained that now the manifold wisdom of God would be made known unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places according to His eternal purpose which he accomplished through Christ Jesus our Lord (Eph. 3:1-12).
- To treat the blood of Jesus as something unholy is to invite damnation (Heb. 10:26-31).

THE LORD’S SUPPER

“When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. And he said to them, ‘I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God.’ After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, ‘Take this and divide it among you. For I tell you I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.’ And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.’ In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you. But the hand of him who is going to betray me is with mine on the table. The Son of Man will go as it has been decreed. But woe to that man who betrays him!’ They began to question among themselves which of them it might be who would do this.” (Lk. 22:14-23)

With death on the cross only a few hours away, Jesus went into the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. During that prayer He was in such anguish that an angel from heaven appeared and strengthened Him. His sweat was also as great drops of blood falling to the ground (Lk. 22:43,44).

After Judas died his 30 pieces of silver were used to buy a field which was called “Akeldama,” which means “Field of Blood” (Acts 1:18,19).

In obedience to the leading of the Spirit the early church **“devoted themselves to the apostle’s teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer (Acts 2:42). “Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people” (Acts**

2;46,47). The “breaking of bread” by the early church was later called “The Lord’s Supper” (1 Cor. 11:20).

As we have said, the sacrifice of Jesus for our sins was not forgotten by the early church. In fact, the “breaking of bread” was the primary reason they assembled. The Scriptures record this about the church in Troaz: **“On the first day of the week we came together to break bread” (Acts 20:7).** The use of the word “the” in this verse is significant. They did not assemble on “a” first day of the week, but upon “the” first day of the week. In other words they assembled every first day of the week to break bread. Paul put it like this to the Corinthians: **“Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all share the one loaf.” (1Cor. 10:16,17)**

ABUSE OF THE LORD’S SUPPER

Even though the church in Corinth came behind in no spiritual gift (1 Cor. 1:7), they were still worldly and mere infants in Christ (1 Cor 3:1-9). For this reason Paul had to feed them with milk and not solid food. Division in the church is one symptom of their spiritual immaturity. The disciples of Jesus were to be one (Jn. 17:21), but Satan sewed seeds of division in the church at Corinth. Some followed Paul, others Apollos, others followed Cephas, and still others followed Christ (1 Cor. 1:10-17). CHRIST IS NOT DIVIDED! NO ONE WAS CRUCIFIED FOR US BUT JESUS! WE GATHER TO WORSHIP HIM AND BREAK BREAD TO REMEMBER HIS SACRIFICE. REMEMBER! OTHER FOUNDATION CAN NO MAN LAY THAN JESUS CHRIST (1 COR. 3:11).

Please prayerfully consider: **“In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good. In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it. No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God’s approval. So then, when you come together, it is not the Lord’s Supper you eat, for when you are eating, some of you go ahead with your own private suppers. As a result, one person remains hungry and another gets drunk. Don’t you have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God by humiliating those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? Certainly not in this matter! For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.” For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes. So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves. That**

is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. But if we were more discerning with regard to ourselves, we would not come under such judgment. Nevertheless, when we are judged in this way by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be finally condemned with the world. So then, my brothers and sisters, when you gather to eat, you should all eat together. Anyone who is hungry should eat something at home, so that when you meet together it may not result in judgment. And when I come I will give further directions.” (1 Cor. 11:17-34)

Note:

- Their abuse of the Lord’s supper caused them to come together not for the better but for the worse.
- Their meetings were so carnal that it was impossible for them to eat the Lord’s Supper.
- There was such division and lack of love among them that some were drunk and others were hungry.
- Eating the Lord’s Supper in an unworthy manner is sinning against the Body and Blood of our Lord.
- We should examine ourselves before eating the Lord’s Supper for to eat and drink without discerning His Body is to bring judgment upon ourselves.
- An improper observance of the Lord’s Supper made some of them weak and sick, and others even died.
- The Lord’s Supper is not a peripheral issue but is the center and focus of Christian worship.

THE FIRST MEAL ON THE MOON

On Sunday, July 20, 1969 at precisely 3:17 Eastern Standard Time, the Apollo 11 space craft touched down on the moon. Neal Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin were in the moon lander, while Michael Collins continued to circle above them waiting to transport them back to earth.

On that historic occasion Buzz Aldrin opened a tiny communion kit and asked Houston for a few moments of silence. In that radio blackout he opened tiny packages of bread and wine and read from the Bible: **“I am the vine, you are the branches. Whosoever abides in me will bring forth much fruit”**. As he ate the bread and drank the cup he gave thanks for the intelligence and spirit that brought two young pilots to the Sea of Tranquility. He marveled that the first liquid poured out on the surface of the moon, and the first bread to be eaten there, represented the Body and Blood of Jesus Who had created the moon.

Perhaps Buzz Aldrin's example will help each of us give the Lord's Supper the importance it deserves. It is an awesome responsibility to truly examine ourselves before we eat that bread and drink that cup.

FLESH AND BLOOD CANNOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM

“I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.” (1 Cor. 15:50-54).

Our present heavens and earth, and everything in them, will someday pass away with a great noise and disappear in fervent heat (2 Pet. 3:10). God will then make a “new heaven and a new earth” (Rev. 21:1). In this new universe there will be no need for flesh and blood. Someone has said that we didn't get out of the Stone Age because we ran out of rocks, but because we found something better to make tools out of. In the same way, blood, as amazing as it is, will be replaced by something better.

Though our earthly body is fearfully and wonderfully made (Ps. 139:14), it has been contaminated by the corruption of this world. In fact, the whole creation is groaning and travailing in pain from the bondage and decay (Rom. 8:18-25). The wonder of our present world, however, is not worthy to be compared with the glory that will be revealed when Jesus comes again.

The body of Jesus came out of the tomb better than it went in. His old body got tired and suffered from pain and decay. You could touch and feel His new body, but it didn't have blood. The gaping wound in the side of Jesus did not bleed. Yes! Jesus could also eat, but somehow that nourishment invigorated His body without the necessity of blood (Lk. 24:36-43). The new body of Jesus could enter a room when the doors were locked (John 20:26,27). The new body could travel from Emmaus to Jerusalem without walking (Lk. 24:36). Someday our vile and lowly bodies will be transformed to be like His glorious body (Phil. 3:21). Someday, when He appears, we will be like Him, for we will see Him as He is (1 Jn. 3:2). Our new bodies will be without blood, and will be imperishable, immortal, and eternal.

“If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. 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 someone deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified them, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? For we

know him who said, “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,”and again, “The Lord will judge his people.” It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” (Heb. 10:26-31)

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