

Life Is In The Blood

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The Bible has a lot to say about blood. The first time the word appears in the King James version is **Genesis 4:10**, where God says that the blood of Abel cried from the ground. Before this, in **Genesis 3:21**, we read that after Adam and Eve sinned, God made coats of skins to clothe them. While blood is not mentioned, it seems very likely that this was the first case of death and bloodshed since the creation of a perfect paradise. God told Adam and Eve that their disobedience would result in death which, of course, it did. They did not die immediately, but they ushered in sin and death, claiming their earthly lives eventually. The animals, however, died much sooner, becoming the first of many animal sacrifices to cover for sin. This is where we can see the idea of life and blood in our world. In a physical sense, we all realize that if an animal or a person loses enough blood, they lose their life.

In the recent past, we had a patient with an internal bleed at work. The patient seemed reasonably stable and was being monitored closely in the ICU. During the last few hours of the shift, the nurse who cared for this patient called me to his room. While being new and inexperienced, I immediately felt that something was wrong when I entered the room. The patient's skin color had changed. He was sweating and seemed less responsive. It was as if his life was draining away before my very eyes. That was, in fact, the case as this gentleman was hemorrhaging internally. Usually, when we administer blood intravenously at the hospital, it is done very slowly over several hours due to the risk of a reaction. In this case, my coworker injected three units of blood and a few bags of normal saline into him in the last two hours of our shift to save his life. While I understand how blood works in our bodies and how vital it is, this became a perfect image of the truth of life being in the blood.

Think of all the blood shed by sacrifices over the years. When preparing for the first Passover, God told the children of Israel in **Exodus 12:13**, *"when I see the blood, I will pass over you."* On the day Solomon dedicated the temple in **1 Kings 8:63**, he offered 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep. That alone is more blood than I can imagine. Think of all the sacrifices for sin: peace offerings, the evening sacrifice, and countless thousands of animals that shed their blood over the years. Yet we read in **Hebrews 10:1-4** that the blood of these animals could not take away sin and make the sinners perfect. Verse three states explicitly that there is a remembrance of sin every year in those old sacrifices. It seems that the blood of all these animals acted much as the covering of skins did for Adam and Eve and the blood on the doorposts and lintel in Egypt. The blood helped to cover their sins while it could not remit them. Remission came only through the blood of the perfect son of God (**Hebrews 10:16-18**).

This brings us back again to the thought of life being in the blood. Jesus spoke a *"hard saying"* in **John 6**. Verse 53 says,

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you."

Those listening had a hard time with this idea. Eating blood is one law that applied to every dispensation. It was forbidden in the patriarchal age when God spoke to Noah. It was forbidden to Israel under the Mosaic covenant: **Leviticus 17:14** *"Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh: for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof."* And it was also one of the things that the apostles said was forbidden to Christians in **Acts 15:20**. How strange this statement of eating flesh and drinking blood would have sounded to those listening to Jesus. Remember how Peter reacted in Joppa when hearing a voice tell him to eat unclean animals in **Acts 10:14**. Of course, we understand that Jesus was talking in a spiritual sense, not literally. We do this each Lord's Day in remembrance of the fact that Jesus gave his life/blood on Calvary so that we might have life

through his blood. I dare say that without the blood of Christ, we are as dead spiritually as we would be dead physically without our blood.

How would you feel if you had some of that animal blood slung onto you or placed on your ear, thumb, and toe (**Exodus 29:20, Hebrews 9:19**)? **Revelation 1:5** and **7:14** mentions being washed in blood. What a strange thought that is to me. And yet, we are told that when bathed in the blood of Christ rather than staining as physical blood does, we become white as snow. What a great thought! May we never forget or take for granted that God gave us life through blood.