

Twelve Lessons

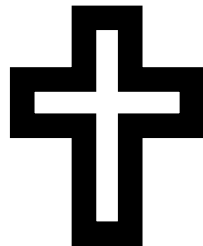
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The Doctrine of the Blood

Compiled and Written

by

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THE BLOOD COVENANT – LESSON 1

John 15:13-15; Matthew 26:28

Introduction – Most people are acquainted with a “covenant of blood.” Most every young boy has a buddy with whom he has made a blood covenant.

Lesson Goals:

1. Examine the history of the term “blood covenant.”
2. To research the significance of the “blood covenant” in the Old Testament.
3. Analyze how Jesus incorporated the “blood covenant” in His terminology.

Definitions of Important Terms and/or Phrases:

1. Covenant – An agreement between two people or two groups that involves promises on the part of each to the other. The concept of covenant between God and His people is one of the most important theological truths of the Bible (Nelson’s Bible Dictionary).
2. Atonement – In accordance with the force of these terms of Scripture the atonement is the covering over of sin, the reconciliation between God and man, accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ. It is that special result of Christ’s sacrificial sufferings and death by virtue of which all who exercise proper penitence and faith receive forgiveness of their sins and obtain peace (New Unger’s Bible Dictionary).
3. Phylacteries – A phylactery, or frontal (which see), was a strip of parchment with four passages of Scripture written upon it in the following order: Deut. 11:13-22; 6:4-9; Ex. 13:11-16,1-10. Each strip was rolled up, tied with the white hairs of a calf’s or a cow’s tail, and placed in one of the compartments of a small box. During prayer these phylacteries were worn by the male Israelites firmly attached with leather straps to the forehead between the eyebrows, and on the left arm, so as to be near the heart (New Unger’s Bible Dictionary).
4. Circumcision – The ceremony of circumcision consisted in cutting away the foreskin, i.e., the hood or fold of skin covering the head of the male organ. This is generally done by means of a sharp knife, but in more primitive times sharp stones were used (Ex. 4:25; Josh. 5:2) (New Unger’s Bible Dictionary).

I. THE HISTORY – The earliest record is an Ancient Semitic Rite. The blood covenant that God gave Adam & Eve has endured in spite of man’s degraded nature.

A. Two persons – The Blood Covenant is the closest, most enduring, and sacred of all covenants.

1. Lev. 17:14 – *“Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh: for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof: whosoever eateth it shall be cut off.”*
2. Blood shed was “life poured out” – In blood covenanting, one was giving his life for his friend.
 - a. The intermingling of blood speaks of each giving the other his life. This is the doctrine of substitution found in II Cor. 5:21.
 - b. Lev. 17:14 was explaining that Blood was not something to trifle with because if you “drank the blood” you were going into a covenant.

B. The Ceremony

1. A Public Announcement – In essence this was what John was saying, *“Behold the Lamb of God.”*
2. A Written Declaration in Duplicate was signed by the participants and several witnesses. Heb. 12:23 – *“church of the first born, which are written in heaven”* is verifying God’s declaration.
3. The Cutting – “Covenant” means to “cut.” A lancet was stuck into open vein. They they would take a quill and suck out the blood. Later this was symbolized by the fruit of the vine. Grape juice is called the “blood of the grape.”
 - a. John 6:53 – *“Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.”*
 - b. Matt. 26:27-28 – *“And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for man for the remission of sins.”*
4. The lancet was then wiped on one of the duplicate papers. *“When I see the blood”, “Blood that makes atonement”* is the public declaration of blood atonement. All of the above was repeated by the friend.
5. Recording the Covenant – It was folded into an inch square, put in a leathern case called an amulet and worn around the neck or bound upon the arm.
6. Another Ceremony was when two friends would make a blood covenant while lying beneath grassy sod.
 - a. This pictures the burial of two individuals that the two may become one in order to rise together.
 - b. Rom. 6:4-6 – *“so we also should walk in newness of life.”* Is a picture of our identification with Christ.

7. Ceremony of Cutting the Hands – The hand of each was cut and the cut part of each was placed together. Isa. 49:16 – “Behold I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands” means to do this action.
 - a. John 10:28 – “And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.”
 - b. This statement is another demonstration of the practice of cutting the hands.

C. The Binding of the Covenant – This forms a tie which cannot be dissolved.

1. This covenant is stronger than a birth relationship or a marriage relationship. Prov. 18:24 – “There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.” This is speaking of a blood covenant.
2. David & Jonathan – II Sam. 1:26 – “thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women” This is not an implication of sodomy but a covenant that was stronger than the marriage covenant.
 - a. I Sam. 18:3 – David & Jonathan “made a covenant”
 - b. II Sam. 21:7 – “But the king spared Mephibosheth... because of the Lord’s oath that was between them, between David and Jonathan the son of Saul.”

D. The Meaning

1. The Covenanter now possesses a double life. His friend is now ready to lay down his life with him or for him.
 - a. John 15:13 – “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” is a New Testament wording of this double life.
 - b. Ecc. 4:9-10 – “Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow.”
 - c. Heb. 13:5 – “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”
2. The Covenanter – The friend must provide for the wants of the other. Matt. 6:31-32
3. The Covenanter – The friend has weighty obligations in behalf of the family of the deceased. See II Sam. 21:7
4. Symbolism of Ring is another symbol of a blood covenant. Why do we wear wedding rings? In the ancient custom, the ring was dipped in blood and given to express giving one’s life in a blood covenant.
 - a. Gen. 41:41-42 – Pharaoh gave Joseph his ring – Symbolic of a blood covenant.
 - b. Luke 15:32 – The Father gave the Prodigal his ring – Symbolic of a blood covenant.
 - c. Why do we wear wedding rings on the fourth finger of the left hand? Because the ancients believed that a very delicate nerve ran from the fourth finger of the left hand to the heart.
4. Symbolism of Phylacteries – This was a small leather case tied to the head or arm. It contained scriptures of God’s covenant with Israel – Ex. 13:1-10, Ex. 13:11-16, Deut. 6:4-9, and Deut. 11:13-21.
 - a. A red thread could be substituted when there was danger in wearing the phylactery.
 - b. Joshua 2:18 – “thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window”

II. THE BLOOD COVENANT – OLD TESTAMENT

A. Abel

1. Abel made a blood covenant with God while Cain merely gives God a present.
2. When Abel was murdered, God said, “the voice of thy brother’s blood crieth unto me from the ground”

B. Noah – After the flood

1. The first act was a blood covenant.
2. Gen. 8 – Noahic covenant was confirmed by a bow in the cloud. The Earth never be destroyed by water again.

C. Abraham was circumcised – This showed a Blood covenant with God. Gen. 17:11 – “And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.”

1. James 2:23 – “...and he was called the Friend of God”
2. II Chron. 20:7 – “Abraham thy friend for ever”
3. Isa. 41:8 – “Abraham my friend”

D. Moses – Ex. 4:20-26 – He married Zipporah – A Midianite, a Heathen

1. Ex. 4:24 – “the Lord met him, and sought to kill him”
2. Ex. 4:25 – Zipporah circumcised their son – Vs. 26 – “So he (God) let him go” – Zipporah and her son were brought into a blood-covenant relationship.
3. Moses is called a “bloody husband” which means a “blood-won” relationship.

E. Moses at Mt. Sinai

1. Moses brought the people into blood-covenant.
2. Ex. 24:3-6 – Moses took the blood, sprinkled the blood on the altar (vs. 6), the book (Heb. 9:19), and the

people (vs. 9) and said, "*Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words*" – Ex.24:8

III. THE BLOOD COVENANT – NEW TESTAMENT

A. The Ceremony

B. The Announcement

C. The Participants – There had to be two participants.

1. Since man could not present perfect blood to God for the covenant, Jesus became man and was circumcised.
2. Jesus as man offered man's blood to God but Jesus as God offered God's blood to man.

D. Symbolism of the Lord's Supper

1. Mark 14:24 – "*This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.*"
2. Luke 22:20 – "*This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.*"
3. Matt. 26:28 – "*For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.*"
4. I Cor. 11:25 – "*This cup is the new testament in my blood*"

Conclusion: John 6:53-56

1. Verse 53 – Divine Exception – "*ye have no life in you.*"
2. Verse 54 – Eternal life – "*hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.*"
3. Verse 56 – Blood Covenant – "*dwelleth in me, and I in him.*"