

Th224 Sin and Atonement: The Restoration of Relationship

Lesson Th224-21 Atonement: The shedding of blood

There was a family who ran a business together. Without the father's knowledge, the eldest son was using the business credit card to buy things for himself. One day the father discovered that his son had run the business deeply into debt. This made the father both angry and heartbroken. His own son had been stealing from the family business!

The father did not know what to do. His son then married, moved to another city and started his own business. He left his father and the family business with the huge debt. The father loved his son deeply and missed him. But whenever he reached out to his son, there was this huge debt that stood as a barrier between them. The father's love was more than willing to forgive his son. But, the unpaid debt remained and the son did not have the resources to pay the debt. The son felt great guilt over what he had done to his father. The guilt led to shame and embarrassment, which made a restoration between the father and son seem impossible.

Our sins are a debt we cannot pay. God's law demands that sin be paid for. Remember what the apostle Paul wrote, "The wages of sin is death" (Rom 6:23). And it is also written in the Book of Hebrews, "The law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Heb 9:22). This concept of blood being required to wash away the guilt and shame of sin can be traced all the way back to Adam and Eve.

After Adam and Eve sinned, they hid themselves from God. They realized that they were naked and ashamed. After God pronounced judgment upon them, he killed animals and made clothes from the animal skins to cover their nakedness. This is the first recorded incident of death and the shedding of blood in the Bible. The animals had to die, with their blood being shed, in order to cover Adam and Eve's nakedness and shame. Now it could be argued that God could have woven leaves together to create something for them to wear. This would have covered their nakedness, but it would not have taught Adam and Eve the seriousness of their sinful condition.

God himself was teaching Adam and Eve that the wages of sin is death. Remember, in the Garden of Eden was the tree of life. If Adam and Eve ate from this tree, they would not grow old and die. But they had disobeyed God by eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; the punishment for this disobedience was death. Their punishment was to be cast out of the Garden because of their sin. They lost access to the tree of life. Away from the tree of life, they would now begin to grow old and eventually die. Adam and Eve were now living under a sentence of death; their relationship with God was broken. The debt of sin required them to die, and only death would satisfy this debt.

The sons of Adam and Eve decided that they would bring an offering to God. They were both born without relationship with God and thus there was nothing to balance their instinctive selfish instincts. This led to their sin, guilt, and shame. So, Cain, who was a farmer, brought some of his harvest to present to God. Abel, his younger brother, was a shepherd. After

butchering a lamb, he brought the best parts to God as a sacrifice. God was pleased with Abel's sacrifice and accepted it. Abel must have felt great joy at this. It was like his sacrifice was removing the barrier between himself and God. Cain would not experience this joy as God was not pleased with Cain's sacrifice. He did not accept it. Can you imagine the embarrassment and shame he must have experienced? Instead of feeling closer to God, he felt farther away, separated by his guilt and shame, and unaccepted by God. Jealousy is an instinctive selfish emotion. Without relationship with God to balance these emotions, Cain became hurt and angry. His anger was not focused on himself or his own behavior, but rather he turned his anger on his brother. Cain finally lured his brother out into a field and there murdered him.

In both of these stories we see where God has placed value upon the shedding of blood in regard to mankind's sinful condition.

This lesson is **important** because it demonstrates how God himself established the severity of sin and guilt, when he shed the blood of animals to make a covering for Adam and Eve's nakedness.

The **main truth** of this lesson is that the law demands the shedding of blood, which is death, for the covering of sin and guilt.

Let's **review** this lesson—

1. What did God do to cover Adam and Eve's nakedness? [Pause 5 seconds.]
 - A. If you said, "God killed animals and used their skins to make clothing," you are right.
2. Why did God accept Abel's sacrifice and reject Cain's? [Pause 5 seconds.]
 - A. If you said, "Abel shed the blood of lambs to bring God a sacrifice, while Cain brought some of the grain from his harvest," you are correct.
3. What are the wages or payment for sin? [Pause 5 seconds.]
 - A. If you answered, "The wages of sin is death," you answered correctly.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to watch this lesson at least three more times and think about the shame and guilt we all experience because of sin. Then find someone and have a discussion with them exploring how all of mankind has a debt that cannot be paid and how this debt requires us all to die. Quote the verse we have previously learned, "The wages of sin is death" (Rom 6:23).