

The Wednesday Word, July 28, 2010: The Foundation of Peace

Someone once said that the Bible is a blood stained book and that Christianity is a blood stained religion. Like it or not, 'blood' plays a central role in our salvation. Thankfully, God has told us why He emphasizes the blood and it is as we understand what He says about this matter, that we get an insight into the very foundation of our peace with God.

In the Old Testament sacrifices, from the days of Abel onward, we are given the key to the meaning of the blood, and the explanation of the remission of sins. The great truth taught by God was, "Not without blood" (Heb. 9:7). >From the beginning and for more than two thousand years, during the age of the patriarchs, there was but one great sacrifice, the burnt offering. In the time of Moses, this one offering was split into various parts; the peace offering, the trespass offering, the sin offering, etc (See the book of Leviticus). In all of these, however, the presence of blood and the fire preserved the fundamental nature of the original burnt offering. Why the blood? It was the sign of substitution. Why the fire? It was the representation of God's wrath upon the substitute. By the time of the Temple we see each day, morning and evening a lamb sacrificed in the tradition of the ancient Burnt Offering (1 Chronicles 16:40).

Of course all these sacrifices pointed to the one final sacrifice who was yet to come. This is what John referred to when he pointed at Jesus saying, "Behold the Lamb of God, that takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Josephus, the Jewish historian when writing about John the Baptist, said – "When John the Baptist entered his ministry, that particular year 260,000 lambs were slain at the Passover!" Imagine that! – 260,000 lambs and yet their combined power could not take away one sin! But, listen to the contrast on that day when John lifted up his eyes and made his grand declaration,. He was saying, "Behold Yahweh's lamb, the Lamb whom Yahweh Himself has provided (Gen 22:8). This is the true sacrificial lamb; this is the one who will be led as a lamb to the slaughter (Isa 53:7). This is the one with the power to remove the sins of the world. This is THE Lamb"

In all the sacrifices of the Old Testament the shedding of the blood was the infliction of death. The "blood was the life" (Gen 9:4); the blood made atonement for the soul (Lev 17:11). This blood shedding or life-taking was the payment for the penalty for sin; for "The soul that sins, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:20), and "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). So when Christ hung upon the cross, He did so as the great offering for our sins. He poured out His soul unto death (Isa 53:12). This is God's perfect ultimate and only sacrifice with which He is satisfied forever!

Since the Father is satisfied with the doing and dying of the Son, so should we be! Since Christ died for us, we have the certainty of eternal life. Since He has been punished in our stead that means that we cannot now be punished. God, being just, will not punish Christ first, and then punish us afterwards for the same crimes. Our Savior died, the Lamb was slain and we are now free from the possibility of God's wrath. We can walk through this life secure. God is not out to get us. There are no thunderbolts from heaven being hurled at us. There are no flames of hell waiting for us since Christ has paid and suffered for us. Do you believe this?

What mighty sum paid all my debt,
When I a bondsman stood,

And has my soul at freedom set?
'Tis Jesus' precious blood

What stream is that that which sweeps away
My sins just like a flood,
Nor lets one guilty blemish stay?
'Tis Jesus' precious blood

And that's the Gospel Truth