

The Blood of Jesus

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Introduction

In the early days of my Christian life in the seventies, it was very common to sing hymns and choruses about the blood of Jesus. As a young Christian I grew up hearing about the blood of Jesus and became acquainted with its importance and central position in the Christian faith. How sad today that that we hear so little about the blood. Not only do we rarely sing about the blood of Jesus but it is only on the few occasions that we hear anything taught about the blood. As we will find later on in this study, even when we take communion and speak of the body of Jesus and the blood of Jesus, even the very words we so often repeat prior to partaking of the cup representing the blood have become greatly weakened and have lost their true meaning. And yet the theme of blood runs throughout the bible from Genesis to Revelation. It is impossible to read the word of God without repeatedly finding it mentioned. As we shall discover, God makes it very clear in His word how important blood is. In the Old Testament God's instructions to the Israelites in the use of blood clearly points to why it was crucial that when Jesus died on the cross He shed His own blood on our behalf. We will discover that had Jesus not shed any of His blood, our redemption would not have been possible.

When we move into the New Testament we shall find over and over again references to the blood of Jesus which reveal all that has been accomplished because the blood of God's only Son was shed.

My desire is that as we consider this important subject together, we will once again appreciate how central to our Christian faith the blood of Jesus is.

First reference to blood.

The fact that the theme of blood runs throughout the bible from Genesis to Revelation clearly illustrates the vital importance of it in the sight of God. We begin our study in Genesis.

When God created Adam and Eve He gave very clear instructions to them:

‘Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” Genesis 2v15-17

God tells man that he is free to eat of any tree except for the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. He also reveals what the consequences will be for eating of that tree, ***you shall surely die.***

Despite God's warning, we read in the following chapter that satan deceives Eve and as a result both Adam and Eve eat from the very tree God has commanded them not to eat of.

‘Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’” And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.’” Then the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” Genesis 3v1-5

As soon as Adam and Eve ate of the tree everything changed and they suddenly became aware of their nakedness. Due to this they sought to deal with it by sewing fig leaves together to be used as a covering.

‘So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.’ Genesis 3v6-7

Although Adam and Eve were naked before the fall, I think we can safely assume that they were 'clothed' with the glory of God continually reflecting His magnificence. But when sin entered the human race the glory was lifted and for the very first time they were aware of their nakedness.

Despite their sin resulting in God's judgment firstly upon the serpent (satan), then Eve and finally upon Adam, we read of the grace of God in that He clothed them to hide their nakedness.

'Also for Adam and his wife the Lord God made tunics of skin, and clothed them.'
Genesis 3v21

Accepting there is no mention in Genesis chapter 3v21 that God made the tunics for Adam and Eve from the skins of animals, I believe it is highly likely that this is where the tunics came from. In order to gain the skins, the animal or animals would have had to be killed and therefore blood would have been shed. Is this the first reference to blood in the bible I will leave the reader to decide.

Blood cries out

We now move into Genesis chapter four where there can be no question at all as to the word 'blood' being mentioned. We find Cain and Abel the children of Adam and Eve, bringing their sacrifices to God. Cain who was a tiller of the ground brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to God and Abel a keeper of sheep brought of the firstborn of his flock.

‘And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD. Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.’

Genesis 4v3-4

God's attitude towards Abel's sacrifice was very different compared with His attitude towards Cain's sacrifice. (Although it isn't clear from scripture at this point, I would suggest the reason for the difference in God's acceptance of Abel's sacrifice compared with Cain's was because blood was shed.) We are told that Abel sacrificed the firstborn of his flock which meant blood would have been shed. Cain on the other hand brought a sacrifice of the fruit of the ground which meant no blood would have been shed.

Because God ***did not respect Cain and his offering***, Cain became angry. If anger is not dealt with it can grow and as we see with Cain it grew to the point of him committing murder.

‘Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.’ *Genesis 4v8*

This is the first time in the bible that we read of murder taking place and because of it the blood of Abel cries out to God.

‘Then the Lord said to Cain, “Where is Abel your brother?” He said, “I do not know. Am I my brother’s keeper?” And He said, “What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood cries out to Me from the ground.’ *Genesis 4v9-10*

We could have read that it was Abel's death that cried out to God, or that his body cried out to God or that his murder had cried out to God. We don't read any of those statements, what we do read is that Abel's blood cries out to God. Why, because as we shall discover it is the blood that is extremely important to God. In fact, blood shed as a result of murder can even have an effect on the very land where it is shed.

‘And these things shall be a statute of judgment to you throughout your generations in all your dwellings. Whoever kills a person, the murderer shall be put

to death on the testimony of witnesses; but one witness is not sufficient testimony against a person for the death penalty. Moreover you shall take no ransom for the life of a murderer who is guilty of death, but he shall surely be put to death. And you shall take no ransom for him who has fled to his city of refuge, that he may return to dwell in the land before the death of the priest. So you shall not pollute the land where you are; for blood defiles the land, and no atonement can be made for the land, for the blood that is shed on it, except by the blood of him who shed it. Therefore do not defile the land which you inhabit, in the midst of which I dwell; for I the LORD dwell among the children of Israel.’ ” Numbers 35v29-34

In His instructions to the Israelites regarding dealing with a murderer, God makes it clear that unless the blood of the murderer is shed, the very land itself will become polluted or defiled. Yet again we read it is not the death of the person that pollutes the land, nor is it his dead body that pollutes the land, but it is the shed blood that brings defilement *for blood defiles the land.*

Importance of blood

We have already begun to see the how important blood is in the sight of God. As we consider the following scriptures we become increasingly aware of that fact.

Before the flood God gave man seed bearing plants and fruit from trees to eat, animals were not included in man's diet.

'And God said (to man), "See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food.' Genesis 1v29

In the following verse we find that God gave the same diet to the animals, to the birds and to every creeping thing.

'Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life, I have given every green herb for food'; and it was so.' Genesis 1v30

After the flood the instructions regarding what man could eat changed. When Noah and his family came out of the ark, God spoke to him regarding the food he could eat.

'Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs. But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood.' Genesis 9v3-4

By giving these instructions to Noah, God is making it very clear there is something very special about blood to such a degree that He commanded Noah not to ***eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood.***

We find in the book of Leviticus the reason why man was commanded not to flesh with its life, that is its blood. It is because the blood has a very significant purpose.

'For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.' Leviticus 17:11

God says that He has given the blood, that is the blood of animals, to make ***atonement for your soul.*** No blood no atonement (reconciliation.) To atone means to make amends--to repair a wrong done. Biblically, it means to remove guilt of man. A few verses down in the same chapter we discover the punishment any Israelite would receive if they were to eat the blood of any flesh.

"for it is the life of all flesh. Its blood sustains its life. Therefore I said to the

***children of Israel, 'You shall not eat the blood of any flesh, for the life of all flesh is its blood. Whoever eats it shall be cut off.'* Leviticus 17:14**

This verse shows the severity of the punishment any Israelite eating the blood of any flesh would receive. They would be cut off from their people. We may ask, "Why was the punishment so severe?" The answer is because God was revealing to man the importance of blood. So important in fact, that without blood there can be no atonement. Without blood there can be no removal of guilt. This was all a 'shadow' of what was to come. There would come a time in history when God would send His very own Son to die on a cross and to shed His blood as an atonement in order to reconcile man to Himself.

***'For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.'* Colossians 1v19-20**

The blood sprinkled

Continuing in the O.T. we now look at various scriptures describing the sprinkling of blood. We will also discover this same theme mentioned in the N.T.

‘Then King Hezekiah rose early, gathered the rulers of the city, and went up to the house of the LORD. And they brought seven bulls, seven rams, seven lambs, and seven male goats for a sin offering for the kingdom, for the sanctuary, and for Judah. Then he commanded the priests, the sons of Aaron, to offer them on the altar of the LORD. So they killed the bulls, and the priests received the blood and sprinkled it on the altar. Likewise they killed the rams and sprinkled the blood on the altar. They also killed the lambs and sprinkled the blood on the altar. Then they brought out the male goats for the sin offering before the king and the assembly, and they laid their hands on them. And the priests killed them; and they presented their blood on the altar as a sin offering to make an atonement for all Israel, for the king commanded that the burnt offering and the sin offering be made for all Israel.’ 2Chronicles 29v20-24

When the bulls were killed as an offering the blood was sprinkled on the altar. When the rams were killed as an offering the blood was sprinkled on the altar. When the lambs were killed as an offering the blood was sprinkled on the altar. And when the male goats were killed as an offering the blood was sprinkled on the altar. It wasn't sufficient to merely kill the animals and offer them as a sacrifice, something else had to be done. The animals blood had to be sprinkled on the altar. Why was it not sufficient to simply sacrifice the animals as an offering to the Lord, why did the blood have to be sprinkled on the altar. The answer is clear, without blood there is no forgiveness.

‘And according to the law almost all things are purified (cleansed) with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission (forgiveness).’ Hebrews 9v22

In Leviticus we read how the two sons of Aaron sinned by offering 'profane' fire before the Lord and as a result God's judgment fell on them both.

‘Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. So fire went out from the LORD and devoured them, and they died before the LORD’ Leviticus 10v1-2

As we jump to Leviticus chapter 16 God speaks to Moses informing him that, as a result of the sin of Nadab and Abihu, Aaron is required to come to the Holy Place with the blood of a young bull as a sin offering.

‘Now the LORD spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered profane fire before the LORD, and died; and the LORD said to Moses: “Tell Aaron your brother not to come at just any time into the Holy Place inside the veil,

before the mercy seat which is on the ark, lest he die; for I will appear in the cloud above the mercy seat. Thus Aaron shall come into the Holy Place: with the blood of a young bull as a sin offering, and of a ram as a burnt offering.’ Leviticus 16v1-3

We soon discover why it was important for Aaron to come to the Holy Place ***with the blood of a young bull***, it was to make atonement for himself and his family.

“Aaron shall offer the bull as a sin offering, which is for himself, and make atonement for himself and for his house.’ Verse 6

We could think of atonement as God providing a way for man to come back into harmonious relationship with Him. It is God providing a means where man can be reconciled back to Himself. And for atonement or reconciliation to take place blood has to be used. In the O.T. it is the blood of animals and in the N.T. atonement is by means of the once and for all time sacrifice of Jesus shedding His own blood on the cross.

As we continue to read Leviticus chapter 16 God gives instructions to Aaron through Moses what he is required to do with the blood of the young bull.

‘He shall take some of the blood of the bull and sprinkle it with his finger on the mercy seat on the east side; and before the mercy seat he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times.’ Leviticus 16v14

Aaron was required to ***sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times***, seven being the number for perfection and completeness.

‘And he shall go out to the altar that is before the LORD, and make atonement for it, and shall take some of the blood of the bull and some of the blood of the goat, and put it on the horns of the altar all around. Then he shall sprinkle some of the blood on it with his finger seven times, cleanse it, and consecrate it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel’ . Leviticus 16v18-19

It is clear from the above verses that in order for there to be any atonement or reconciliation between God and man, blood had to be used. And as part of the process of the blood being used there were occasions where God required the blood to be sprinkled.

In Exodus chapter 24 after meeting with God, we find Moses telling all the people all that God had said. Moses then writes down all that God had said and rising early in the morning builds an altar. Burnt offering and peace offerings are made to the Lord. Moses then does something very important with the blood from the animals that were offered:

‘And Moses took half the blood and put it in basins, and half the blood he sprinkled on the altar. Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, “All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient.” And Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said, “This is the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you according to all these

words.” Exodus 24 v6-8

We read that half of the blood was put in basins and the other half of blood was *sprinkled* on the altar. After reading from the *Book of the Covenant* in the hearing of the people, Moses takes some blood and sprinkles it on the people with the words *“This is the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you according to all these words.”*

Once again we read that blood was sprinkled. The writer of the book of Hebrews records this event:

‘For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, “This is the blood of the covenant which God has commanded you.” Then likewise he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission (forgiveness).’ Hebrews 9v19-22

Further references regarding the sprinkling of blood:

‘By faith he (Moses) kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he who destroyed the firstborn should touch them.’ Hebrews 11v28

‘But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.’ Hebrews 12v22-24

‘elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ’ 1 Peter 1v2

We can see from the above scriptures that not only did the blood of animals being shed point to the Son of God shedding His blood for us, but even the sprinkling of the blood of animals pointed to the *sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ*.

The blood applied

If ever we needed to read about an event taking place in the O.T. to illustrate the power and effectiveness of blood, there can surely be no greater example than the story of the children of Israel being delivered from Egypt. Not only does this story firmly convey the power and authority of blood in the eyes of God, but it is a perfect picture pointing to the effectiveness of the shed blood of Jesus on the cross.

The Israelites had been slaves under Pharaoh in the land of Egypt for about 400 years. But the time came for them to be delivered from slavery in order to make their journey to the Promised Land. For this to take place God chose Moses to be the one to lead them out. Time and time again God releases a plague against Pharaoh and his people, and time and time again Pharaoh hardens his heart and refuses to let them go. Eventually we come to the tenth and final plague that results in the Israelites deliverance.

‘Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, “This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you. Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: ‘On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household. And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next to his house take it according to the number of the persons; according to each man’s need you shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats.’ Exodus 12v1-5

Notice the Israelites were told to get a lamb but not just any lamb. The lamb had to be perfect and without blemish. As we shall discover, it was the blood from this lamb that would result in the Israelites deliverance and it would be the blood of Jesus the very perfect 'Lamb of God' which would result in mankind's deliverance.

‘The next day John (the Baptist) saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! John 1v29

According to Exodus chapter 12 every man was to *take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household.* But for our deliverance from satan's kingdom of darkness God Himself provided the Lamb. The only One to walk the earth Who was and is perfect. Jesus God's only Son.

As we continue in Exodus chapter 12 we find further similarities between the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and God's provision for the salvation of mankind. When each man had taken a lamb for his household, it was not sufficient that the lamb should be merely killed but blood needed to be taken from the lamb and applied to

the door posts of each home where the Israelites dwelt. If the Israelites had merely killed the lamb but had not applied the blood in accordance with God's command, their deliverance would not have taken place.

'And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it.' Exodus 12:7

Why was it so vitally important that the Israelites applied the blood of the lamb to their door posts. It was because God was about to bring judgement upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians. A judgement which would affect every Egyptian family as God was about to strike dead every firstborn both man and beast as well as bringing judgment to all of the Egyptian gods. A dreadful judgement and the one and only thing which would protect the Israelites was the blood of the lamb on the door posts. No application of the blood, no deliverance from God's judgement.

We now come to a most wonderful and very powerful verse. A verse that clearly explains why it was so important that the Israelites applied the blood to their door posts and a verse that clearly points to the blood of Jesus.

'Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.' Exodus 12:13

What a powerful phrase embedded in **v13, when I see the blood, I will pass over you.** Lets spend a little time considering this incredibly powerful phrase. God did not say, "I am going to pass through the land of Egypt and as I do I am going to examine every Israelite to see if they are worthy to escape My judgement. I am going to look carefully at each life to see if it matches My standard and for each person and family that I find meeting that standard, I will spare them My judgement." No, God did not say anything about examining the lives of each Israelite to see if they met His standard of holiness, instead He was going to examine each of the door posts of the Israelites homes to see if the blood of the lamb had been applied. And for each home where the blood of the lamb had been applied to the door posts in obedience to God's command He says, **when I see the blood, I will pass over you.** It was seeing the blood that God was interested in. The Israelites deliverance from slavery and the land of Egypt was not based on their conduct and standard of holiness, it was completely and totally based on the application of the blood.

What an incredible picture pointing to the effectiveness and relevance of the shed blood of Jesus. Jesus on the cross of Calvary shed His blood for every individual throughout time and God's one and only requirement for man to be delivered from the kingdom of satan and translated into the kingdom of God is whether that individual has 'applied' the blood of Jesus to their lives.

How is the blood of Jesus applied to our lives? At the very point of salvation, in that same split second when we take that step of accepting Jesus as our Lord and Saviour, God in effect applies the saving blood of Jesus His Son to our life and we are immediately freed from the judgement of spending an eternity without God. From the very moment of salvation onwards, even though God knows everything about us, He knows our weaknesses, our failings and our sin, and yet when He looks at us He sees the shed blood of His Son. In the same way that Abel's blood cried out to God resulting in judgement upon Cain, the very blood of Jesus constantly 'speaks' on our behalf declaring the price having been paid in full and therefore we can know God's forgiveness and cleansing.

It was because of the blood of the lamb on the door posts that the Israelites were freed from being slaves in Egypt under the rule of Pharaoh and it is because of the blood of Jesus that we are free from the kingdom of darkness and satan's rule. How truly wonderful that God's acceptance of us is not based on us achieving a certain standard, but His acceptance of us is completely based on the shed blood of Jesus His Son.

What was it that made possible deliverance for the Israelites?

We know the answer, it was the blood of a spotless lamb was taken and applied to the door posts in obedience to God's command. What is it that makes our salvation possible? It is because the blood of Jesus has been shed. We are once again reminded of a scripture considered earlier:

'And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission (forgiveness).' Hebrews 9v22

Blood associated with the Old and New Covenant

When God made a covenant with the nation of Israel, (the Old Covenant) blood was shed.

'Therefore not even the first covenant was dedicated without blood. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, "This is the blood of the covenant which God has commanded you. Then likewise he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.' Hebrews 9v 18-22

We know that the New Covenant came into being as a result of the death of Jesus and once again blood was shed in order for the New Covenant to come about. However, unlike with the establishing of the Old Covenant where the blood of animals was used, in the establishing of the New Covenant the blood of the very Son of God was used.

I mentioned in the introduction how we hear very little about the blood of Jesus in church today. I also stated that even when we take communion and speak of the body of Jesus and the blood of Jesus, the very words we so often repeat prior to partaking of the cup representing the blood have become greatly weakened and have lost their true meaning.

During the communion service prior to taking the bread we often hear the words "the body of Jesus" which is completely scriptural.

Mark 14v22 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them and said, "Take, eat; this is My body."

However, prior to taking the wine we will usually hear the words "the blood of Jesus" or "the blood of Jesus shed for you" which without referring to God's word, we could easily assume there is nothing wrong with those words being spoken. But as we are about to discover Jesus did not use those words during the Last Supper. Instead he used words which would have had incredible meaning for the disciples listening to Him. The last Supper is recorded in three out of the four Gospels and in all three we read the same words that Jesus spoke in relation to His blood being shed.

***'For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.'* Matthew 26v28**

'Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, and they

all drank from it. And He said to them, “This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many.” Mark 14v23-24

‘Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.’ Luke 22v20

Even Paul in his letter to the Corinthians uses the same words.

‘In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” 1 Corinthians 11v25

In all of the above scriptures when Jesus referred to His blood He also referred to the New Covenant. When Jesus shared the last Supper with His disciples hearing those words would not only have held significant meaning for them, but to use today's language the words would have been 'mind blowing'.

No doubt the disciples were aware of the Old Covenant and how blood was associated with it coming into effect. Now they are sitting around the table during the Last Supper and hear for the first time that as a result of the very blood of Jesus being shed a NEW COVENANT is about to come into effect. A covenant which would not only completely replace the Old Covenant but as we shall shortly discover, would bring incredible changes into effect.

I wonder when was the last time you heard anything mentioned about the New Covenant prior to taking the wine representing the blood of Jesus and yet these are the very words Jesus spoke. At the risk of repetition I say again, not only do we hear very little today about the blood of Jesus but when we do hear about it such as when we take communion, the very words spoken have lost their true meaning.

So what is so very different with the New Covenant compared with the Old Covenant. To answer that question fully would require a complete in depth study to be undertaken. However, by simply highlighting some of the key changes it will immediately be apparent how different the New Covenant is. A covenant not established with the blood of animals but established with the blood of our Saviour.

Differences between the Old and New Covenant

Inadequacy of the Old Covenant

Firstly we need to appreciate that because the Old Covenant was inadequate in fully dealing with sin, it necessitated the establishing of new and different covenant.

‘For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second’ Hebrews 8v7

So what was the problem with the Old Covenant. As part of the Old Covenant the law was given which man was expected to keep. However it was, (and still is) impossible for man to keep the Law. One may ask, “*Why then was the Law given*” It was given in order to prove to man that we could not keep the Law and therefore could never be justified, (put right with God) by keeping it. The purpose of the Law was never given in order that we might keep it and therefore be justified before God, it was given in order to minimise sin and to prove to man there he was totally unable to keep the Law and therefore needed a Saviour for justification (to be declared right with God). The purpose of the Law was to act as a 'school master' to bring us to an end of ourselves and so that we might call upon the Saviour.

‘What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator.’ Galatians 3v19

‘Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.’ Galatians 3:24

And so we can see that there was a real problem with the Old Covenant with respect to man being justified and because of this the New Covenant needed to come into effect.

Continual sacrifices made

By reading the following scriptures we find that under the Old Covenant the High Priest was required to enter the most holy place of the tabernacle once every year in order to offer sacrifices both for himself and the people. Note that he could not go into the most holy place without blood. But under the New Covenant one sacrifice was made for all time when Jesus died and shed His own blood. In effect Jesus entered the Holy of Holies as our Great High Priest taking His blood with Him and thereby fully and completely satisfied the requirements of the Law enabling us to be declared righteous in God's sight. There is therefore no longer any requirement for annual offerings to be made, the offering of Jesus blood was sufficient for all people and for all time.

‘Now when these things had been thus prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing the services. But into the second part the high priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people’s sins committed in ignorance’ Hebrews 9v6-7

‘But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.’ Hebrews 9v11-12

‘For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another—He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation’. Hebrews 9v24-28

‘For He made Him (Jesus) who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him’ 2 Corinthians 5v21

Unable to cleanse the conscience

Under the Old Covenant the blood of animals was unable to cleanse the conscience from dead works. This has now been made possible by Jesus shedding His blood for us.

‘For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?’ Hebrews 9v13-14

Entering the Holy of Holies

Under the Old Covenant it was not possible for man to enter the Holy of Holies. Only the High Priest could do that once per year taking the blood of animals with him. In other words, the way into the very Presence of God was not available to man. But now for everyone who confesses Jesus as his/her Lord and Saviour, the way into the very Throne Room of God has been possible because of the blood of Jesus. Not only can we enter the Holy of Holies because of Jesus blood, but the scripture tells us that we can now come boldly and with confidence.

‘Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus.’
Hebrews 10v19

When Jesus died on the cross a wonderful and powerful illustration was given showing that the way into the Holy of Holies was now made possible.

‘And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom’
Matthew 27 v50-51a

Notice that the veil was not torn from the bottom to the top, but from the top to the bottom signifying that this was not the work of man but the work of God Himself.

Sin remembered no more / God's Law in our hearts

Under the Old Covenant there was the remembrance of sin every year because the blood of animals could never remove sin. Under the New Covenant, not only are our sins removed, but God declares He will remember them no more. He doesn't forget our sin He completely removes it.

As a result of the New Covenant God has not only chosen to not remember our sin, but He has put within our very hearts and minds His laws. In other words, by the power of His Holy Spirit within us He has provided a means whereby we are able to walk in a way that is pleasing to Him.

‘This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,’ then He adds, “Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.” Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.’
Hebrews 10v16-18

Sin removed

Under the Old Covenant sin was covered but not removed. Under the New Covenant sin is completely removed.

‘For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.’
Hebrews 10v4

Imagine spilling some coffee on a carpet causing it to stain then taking a cloth to cover the stain so it couldn't be seen. Even though it can't be seen due to the cloth covering it, the stain is still there. But imagine instead of simply putting cloth over the stain, an effective stain remover is applied. After a little work the stain is

completely removed thereby removing any need for the cloth to cover it.

This is exactly what the blood of Jesus has achieved for us. We have already seen that the blood of animals was totally insufficient to remove sin, but the very blood of Jesus completely removes sin from the believer.

How incredibly sad that because of the dilution and weakening of the words spoken prior to taking the wine during communion service, we are no longer regularly reminded that the blood of Jesus has brought into effect a New Covenant with all of its wonderful changes. Can I encourage every believer reading this study prior to passing or taking the wine representing the blood of Jesus to no longer repeat the words. 'the blood of Jesus' but instead to use Jesus own words: the ***blood of the New Covenant.***

The blood of Jesus

As we draw towards a close to this study, a brief consideration is given of all that has been achieved for us because of the blood of Jesus. Without Jesus shedding His blood none of the following would have been made possible.

Redemption

To redeem is to pay a price to buy something back. Jesus paid the highest price possible to redeem us out of slavery and sin. We owed a debt that we could never pay. Because of our sin, satan had a legal right over us enabling him to hold us in his kingdom as slaves but Jesus paid the price in full. He paid the greatest price possible and the price He paid was His very own blood which was shed for us on the cross.

‘In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace’. Ephesians 1v7

‘Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.’ Hebrews 9v12

‘knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.’

1Peter 1v18-19

Brought Near

Once we were alienated from God, we were afar off, but because of the blood of Jesus we have been brought near.

‘But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.’ Ephesians 2v13

Reconciliation

We have been reconciled to God because of the blood of Jesus. Reconciliation involves a change in relationship. There is a change from enmity to one of harmony and fellowship. The change that has taken place in our relationship with God is that once we were enemies but God has reconciled us to Himself and now we are at peace with God. What paid the price to bring about our reconciliation? It was the price of the blood of Jesus.

‘For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross’ Colossians 1v19-20

Continually Cleansed

Not only has God brought us into a right relationship with Himself, but He has provided a way whereby despite our failings we can be continually cleansed. What is it that enables us to be continually cleansed, it is the blood of Jesus.

‘But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.’ 1 John 1v7-9

Justified

Because of the blood of Jesus we have been justified. In other words we have been declared righteous, placed in right standing with God. It is often the case as believers that we do not feel righteous, we look at our life and see the many failings and the shortfalls. But when God looks at us He sees us righteous, no longer sinners clothed in filthy rags, but in right standing with Him. How is it that man could be declared righteous? How is it that man could have fellowship with a Holy God?

We know the answer, it's because of the blood of Jesus.

‘Therefore, having been justified (declared righteous) by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ’ Romans 5v1

Victory over satan

We have an enemy satan who seeks to steal, kill and destroy.

‘The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.’ John 10 v10

Despite having an enemy, God has provided the means whereby we are able to overcome him, it is by the blood of Jesus and the word of our testimony.

‘And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.’ Revelation 12v11

Conclusion

It is because Jesus shed His blood for us that all of the above and much, much more has been made possible. I believe we can now clearly see that it wasn't sufficient that Jesus merely die on a cross for us as wonderful as that would have been, but that He needed to shed His blood. Without His blood being shed none of the scriptures we have just considered in the last section could ever have been written. How very wonderful that God would send His only Son to die and shed His blood for us, a price that we will never be able to fully comprehend. As we have considered in this brief 'study of the topic of blood', and in particular the blood of Jesus, my hope is that once again the blood of Jesus will not only take up a central position in our thinking but will once again become a topic we hear much about in the body of Christ as we meet together.