

**Passover (Pesach 5766)
Begins April 12 at twilight.**

Passover Blessings In Messiah!

BLOOD IN THE BIBLE

As we rejoice in our great deliverance from spiritual Egypt (sin) this month, our focus becomes the requirement of that deliverance: the blood of Yeshua, the Eternal Passover Lamb. His blood has cleansed us, set us free, purchased us, and sanctified us. It continues to protect and renew us day by day. **Our Heavenly Bridegroom's blood is the culmination of a scarlet, salvific stream that courses through the pages of the Tenach** (Older Covenant). God's plan of salvation has always included atonement through blood – from the genesis (beginning).

The word blood, dam (dahm) in Hebrew OD, appears 360 times in the Tenach, most often in Leviticus (88 times) and Ezekiel (55) times. Blood is mentioned 20 times in Exodus, 23 times in Deuteronomy and 21 times in the Psalms. One third of these references refer to the shedding of blood in a sacrifice to God (the other two thirds refer to the shedding of blood through violence, war, etc.)

Blood symbolizes life in the Holy Scriptures. It is a precious commodity. Like life, it has supreme value. The word dam (blood) most probably came from the Hebrew word for the color red, "edom" (eh-DOME). The soil in the Garden of Eden is thought to have been red in color, hence, the word for soil in Hebrew: "adamah" (ah-da-MAH) HMDA It was from this red earth that the Lord God created man. His name reflects the ground from which he came: "adam" (ah-DAHM) ODA . Actually, since both Adam and Eve had the same name in the beginning, they both were related in a mysterious way to blood, the color red and the earth. "Haadam" (ha-ah-DAM) HMDAH is the Hebrew for humankind, both male and female in Genesis 1:27.

The Holy Scriptures declare in Leviticus 17:11 that *"the life of the flesh is in the blood."* After the flood, God blessed Noah and his sons and told them that they could eat every moving thing. *"But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood"* (Genesis 9:4). This same thought is found in Leviticus 17:14 and Deuteronomy 12:23. BLOOD = LIFE.

BLOOD ANALYSIS

During our internet research on "blood," we found a website that used a very interesting phrase for human blood: "the River of Life." It gave the following details: The average human being has 5 liters of blood in his body. 55% of the blood is made up of plasma constituting the fluid part of the blood. The cells and platelets that are present in our blood make up the other 45%. The blood's main functions are to supply our tissues with nutrients and oxygen and remove waste products. Our blood contains various components of the immune system that defend the body against infection. Endocrine hormones also travel in the blood. Human blood is red, ranging from bright red when oxygenated to dark red when not. It owes its color to hemoglobin, a respiratory protein containing iron. This "River of Life" is **incredibly complex**. Only God could have put together red blood cells, white blood cells, platelets, albumin, antibodies, hormones, proteins, salts, etc., etc. to give mankind the gift of life that we call blood!

BLOOD = LIFE

Let us pause this month for a moment and thank our Creator for our blood, a fluid of life, health, and growth. Without it, our body would stop functioning.

BLOOD IN THE GARDEN

The first time that the word "blood" occurs in the Holy Scriptures is in Genesis 4:10 where God questions Cain concerning the murder of his brother Abel: "...What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground." Although we know that blood is alive, we never think of it as having a "voice." In some way, however, blood must speak to God for even later, in the B'rit HaDasha, blood speaks: *"To Yeshua (Jesus) the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel"* (Hebrews 12:24).

This first mention of blood has to do with an act of violence by man, but the first time blood is shed in the Garden it has to do with an act of mercy. God sheds blood! His children, Adam and Eve, sinned, and in sinning, realized that they were naked. God covered them with animal skins (Genesis 3:21). Where did he get the skins? He killed animals. He shed blood to cover His children who had sinned.

Here we have the first foreshadowing of the biblical truth that "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). Sin brings death, but God gives life.

BLOOD AFTER THE FLOOD

On the day that Noah, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives went out of the ark and settled on dry land, Noah built an altar to the Lord, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and sacrificed them to the Lord. In order to offer these burnt offerings on the altar, Noah had to kill them; he shed blood. The Bible tells us that the Lord smelled this offering and it was a soothing aroma to Him. In fact, Noah's sacrifice so pleased God that He said in His heart, *"I will never again curse the ground for man's sake..."* (Genesis 8:20-21). This foreshadows the later blood sacrifice that satisfied God's righteous requirements and delighted His heart.

BLOOD AND ABRAHAM'S COVENANT

The first time we see a "blood covenant" enacted is in Genesis chapter 15 when the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob enters into covenant with His friend Abram. The Hebrew word for covenant, "brit" (b'-REET) TYRb actually means to "cut covenant." Blood is implied in the terminology, since a covenant is an agreement which includes the shedding of blood and walking between pieces of flesh. A blood covenant between two parties is the most solemn and sacred contract possible. It cannot be broken. It involves an exchange of lives and a permanent unto-death relationship.

We encourage you to read the entire account of God's covenant with Abram in Genesis 15. Animals were cut into two pieces and when the sun went down, a "smoking oven" and a "burning torch" passed between those pieces. God made a blood covenant with Abram, but Abram was in a deep sleep while it was happening. God actually made a covenant with Himself on Abram's behalf, promising Abram all of Himself, His protection, His strength, His all. Abram,

like us, had nothing He could offer God in covenant. So God swore by Himself to the covenant. Someone took Abram's place. What about the two "lights" that walked between the bloody pieces? We believe that it was Yeshua, in His pre-incarnate person, who cut covenant with God His Father, and stood in for Abram. This blood covenant, by the way, included the eternal promise of a "land" for Abram's seed: *"To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates"* (Genesis 15:18). There was to be a sign of the covenant between God and Abraham and His seed forever – a sign in the flesh that involved the shedding of Abraham's blood: circumcision. After this token of the covenant, Abraham was called "the friend of God."

BLOOD ON MOUNT MORIAH

Since Abraham and God were now in a blood covenant relationship, God could ask Abraham for anything he possessed, and Abraham was bound to give it to Him. But the life of his only son? Wasn't that too much to ask? Abraham passed the test of his commitment to the covenant and his love for his covenant partner. Blood was shed on Mt. Moriah, but not the blood of Abraham's son, Isaac. Just as Abraham was about to take his son's life, God intervened and stopped him. A substitute sacrifice was provided: a ram caught in a thicket by its horns (Genesis 22). Abraham had proven his faithfulness to the blood covenant, and God had given him a prophetic picture of a sacrifice to come – the eventual sacrifice of God's only Son.

BLOOD AND THE PASSOVER

The deliverance of the Israelites from 400 years of Egyptian bondage was one of many evidences of God's faithfulness to his blood covenant with Abraham. Abraham's seed had a promised inheritance in the land of Canaan. The God who promised this inheritance was about to fulfill it. The moment of deliverance had come. Israel would be set free – by the blood of perfect lambs. The head of each household was to take a lamb, kill it on the 14th of Nisan, take some of the blood and apply it to the two doorposts and the lintel of the house. And God said, *"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). Blood on the doors meant life. No blood on the door (even if Israelites lived in the home) meant death. Not just any blood. The blood had to be from a lamb without blemish, a male of the first year. It is interesting that God used the blood of lambs as the means of delivering His people from slavery since the symbol of Egypt was the serpent. The lamb defeated the serpent! In due time, God used The Eternal Passover Lamb, Yeshua, to defeat the serpent (called the Devil and Satan according to Revelation 12:9) through the shedding of His own blood on the tree – precisely at Passover.

BLOOD AT MOUNT SINAI

Following the Exodus from Egypt, the descendants of Abraham reached Mt. Sinai where God gave them words to live by – the Ten Commandments – and the people answered with one voice, "All the words which the Lord has said we will do" (Exodus 24:3). Moses built an altar at the foot of Mt. Sinai and sent young men to offer burnt offerings and peace offerings of oxen to the Lord. "Moses took half the blood and put it in basins..." (Exodus 24:6). "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 24:8). More blood. More life.

BLOOD IN THE SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM

The sacrificial system instituted at Mt. Sinai dramatically increased the flow of blood in God's sacred, systematic plan of the ages. Leviticus 17:11 is crucial in this context: *"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."* Blood was never to be eaten, but rather presented to God to cover their sin. Under the Mosaic Law there were various sacrifices and offerings. But through all of them – where blood was involved – in the sin offering, the trespass offering, the burnt offering, and the peace offering – blood always represented life, never death.

"Death was essential to its securing; but, when secured, blood was life. Death, as the inevitable wages of sin, had already passed unto all men, and 'death reigned from Adam to Moses'; but, with the full disclosure of the law, in Moses, which made sin apparent, there came, also, a disclosure of an atonement for sin, and of a cure for its consequences. Death was already here; now came the assurance of an attainable life." – H. Clay Trumbull, **The Blood Covenant**.

BLOOD IN THE TEMPLE

Blood was considered precious in the sacrificial system. There were many rules concerning how the cohen (priest) handled the blood. One of them stipulated that the priest was to catch the blood in a silver vessel pointed at the bottom so that it could not be put down. The Temple Institute in Jerusalem has recreated this silver vessel. We have seen it, and heard the explanation about the blood needing to be constantly stirred, keeping it fluid and avoiding coagulation. The ultimate aim of the blood of the sacrifices in the Mosaic system was restored communion with God. No blood. No life. No fellowship with God.

BLOOD AND THE PROPHESED MESSIAH

Seven hundred years before Yeshua (Jesus) was born, the Jewish prophet Isaiah spoke about His sacrificial death as our suffering Messiah. His shed blood was prophesied in such verses as: *"He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed"* (Isaiah 53:5) and *"He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth"* (Isaiah 53:7) and *"He was cut off from the land of the living"* (Isaiah 53:8). Mashiach ben Yosef would one day appear – and die – as an atoning sacrifice for sin. His blood would be shed so that many might be justified (read Isaiah 53:11) and have eternal life.

BLOOD IN THE GARDEN – AGAIN!

This time it was the Garden of Gethsemane, Gan Gat Sh'manim, in Hebrew. Yeshua (Jesus) went to pray there, knowing that the hour of His death was near. As He prayed earnestly, in agony, His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground (Luke 22:44). [These drops were reminiscent of the drops of blood from the cup of judgment spilled each Passover as the 10 plagues are enumerated.] Yeshua's blood would soon satisfy God's righteous judgment of sin. It would mean life to sinful man who deserved death.

BLOOD AND THE B'RIT HADASHA

The New Covenant (B'rit Hadasha) prophesied by the Prophet Jeremiah in Chapter 31 was a new "blood covenant," promised first to the House of Israel and the House of Judah. The

Mediator of that Covenant is Yeshua, the Messiah. At His last Passover Seder, as He took the cup after supper, Yeshua said, *"This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me"* (I Corinthians 11:25).

The entire "New (Blood) Covenant" is filled with references to the blood of Yeshua, the Eternal Lamb of God. This blood has the power to save, redeem, cleanse from sin, protect, forgive, pronounce peace and sanctify. **This blood does more than cover sin. It removes it as if it had never existed!** The New (Blood) Covenant concludes in the final book (Revelation) with a song sung in Heaven to the Lamb of God. This is our song as well at this Holy Passover season:

"You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth" (Revelation 5:9-10). AMEN!

Overcoming, by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony, and wishing you the **same!**

With much love and appreciation!

Neil and Jamie

P. S. **The Miracle of the Scarlet Thread** by Richard Booker is a great book on The Blood Covenant.

P.P.S. **The Blood Covenant** by H.C. Trumbull is a classic, written in 1885.