



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

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Volume 44
Issue 1090

The Bloody Truth

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Chapter 2 – The Problem with “Atonement”

by – Stephen Hill

If you’ve ever heard someone explain “*atonement*” as “at-one-ment,” you’ve heard one of the most repeated (but least accurate) definitions in modern church language. It’s clever, memorable, and largely misleading.



relationship from the corrupting effects of sin and the threat of death.

COVERING MORE THAN PEOPLE

The word “*atonement*” is not a direct translation from the Hebrew Scriptures. In fact, it’s an English invention coined centuries ago to express the idea of making man and God “one.” But here’s the problem: under the Old Covenant, the sacrifices called “*atonement*” never did make man and God one. They provided only a temporary covering – a protective shield of sorts – so that God’s presence could remain among His people.

Sacrifices weren’t just for people. Leviticus records “*atonement*” being made for altars, the Tabernacle, the sanctuary, and even houses (Exodus 30:10; Leviticus 16:16, 33; Leviticus 14:53). Obviously, none of these could sin – they were inanimate objects. What they *could* do was become defiled or unfit for sacred use in God’s presence.

Old Covenant sacrifices were not bridges to God; they were temporary barriers against the consequences of sin and death.

When you read those verses with the correct definition – “protective, cleansing covering” – the picture changes completely. The goal wasn’t moral forgiveness for furniture; it was restoring those items to a state suitable for the holy space where God dwelt. This, of course, served as a continual and ever-present reminder to God’s people of His “other-ness” and their need for – and reliance on – Him.

THE HEBREW PICTURE: *Kaphar*

The original Hebrew word most often translated “*atonement*” is *kaphar*, which means “to cover,” “to purge,” or “to protect.” It’s the same term that God used in Genesis 6:14 when instructing Noah to “cover” the ark with pitch (tar). The purpose wasn’t to make the ark prettier – it was to make it waterproof, to shield and preserve life inside. That is the picture that God chose to communicate: *kaphar* is a protective covering, not a payment to settle an account.

Thus he shall make atonement for the Holy Place, because of the uncleanness of the people

[\(continued on page 9143\)](#)

The sacrificial blood acted like Noah’s pitch – shielding the people, the sacred space, and the covenant

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Bible Student's Notebook™

Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal

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Scripture education in a weekly format!

This free electronic publication is dedicated to:

- the absolute sovereignty and deity of God (Romans 11:36);
- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7);
- the affirmation that God will save all through the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3-4; 4:10; Titus 2:11);
- the universality of death and resurrection (I Corinthians 15:21);
- the unique gospel of Paul – which he calls "my gospel" (Romans 2:16; 16:25; II Timothy 2:8; I Corinthians 15:1-4; Acts 13-28; Acts 20:24);
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret in ages past" (Romans 16:25);
- the epistles of the present Secret Administration being Ephesians & Colossians (Ephesians 3:2, 9; Colossians 1:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the One Body (Ephesians 4:16);
- the Secret Administration, being the operational revelation for today (Ephesians 3:9);
- the unprophesied, Celestial hope and calling of the One Body (Colossians 3:4);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Ephesians 3:1-3);
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15);
- the recovery of rich Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice,

misunderstanding and fear (Mark 7:7, 13);

- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with:
 - total freedom from sins (Colossians 1:14);
 - union in His death, burial and resurrection and ascended seated position among the celestials (Ephesians 2:6);
 - adult sonship position (Ephesians 1:5).

This publication is the product of humble efforts of saints intended to stimulate the earnest study of Scripture. We do not claim infallibility for the contents of this publication; thus they are not meant to imply finality on any subject discussed, or that further research would not add further light from the Word of God. God's storehouse of truth is inexhaustible, so draw on its wealth by prayerful study. Our readers are asked to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; I Thessalonians 5:21).

This publication is not connected with any "church," "denomination," "movement," "organization," "mission," "creed," "meeting," "school," "conference" or "fellowship."

We are always open for discussion, but never for disputation. – André Sneidar

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of Israel and because of their transgressions, for all their sins (Leviticus 16:16).

The “Holy Place” itself needed covering, showing that this is about sacred fitness, not moral guilt.

Modern readers often assume that Israel’s sacrificial system was unique; but, in fact, it stood within the broader landscape of Second Temple Judaism.

The Dead Sea Scrolls, for instance, show that sacrifices were understood less as penalties and more as purifications. In 1QS (Community Rule¹), blood rites are described as cleansing the people so that God’s presence could remain among them, not as payments made to turn away divine anger.

Philo of Alexandria, a first-century Jewish philosopher, also wrote that sacrifices were “symbols of the purification of life.” This Jewish context confirms that, when Christ and His apostles spoke of blood, they meant cleansing, protection and life – not currency intended to pay judicial penalties.

NOT ALWAYS BLOODY

We often assume that every Old Covenant sacrifice involved blood, but this is not the case. Scripture records multiple ways “*atonement*” could be made without the shedding of blood:

- A payment of silver (Exodus 30:15–16)
- A measure of fine flour (Leviticus 5:11)

1. Also known as “Manual of Discipline,” a significant text from the Dead Sea Scrolls, outlining the rules and regulations of a Jewish sect.

- Oil (Leviticus 14:29)
- The scapegoat sent into the wilderness alive (Leviticus 16:10)
- Incense offerings (Numbers 16:46)
- Treasures from war plunder (Numbers 31:50)

Blood was common, but not exclusive. God even made allowances for the poor, telling them to offer birds or grain instead of lambs or goats if necessary (Leviticus 5).

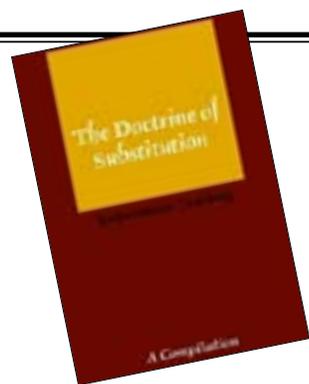
This reveals something important about God’s heart: the key wasn’t the market value of the sacrifice – it was the faith and obedience expressed through giving what one could. His goal was to preserve the relationship, not to exact a uniform payment.

THE ANNUAL RESET

Despite all of these offerings, Israel’s entire covenant relationship with God had to be “reset” every year on the so-called Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). Blood was sprinkled, sacred space was cleansed, and the people were ceremonially purified so that God’s presence would remain among them for another year.

The Tabernacle – and later the Temple – was not just a worship space. In many ways, it was a slaughterhouse. Historical estimates suggest that in Jesus’ day, more than a quarter of a million lambs could be sacrificed during Passover alone.

It’s easy to recoil at the bloodiness of it all; but to the Israelites, this was not gore – it was life. They understood a truth that most modern people overlook: in [\(see PROBLEM, page 9147\)](#)



Second Edition
115 pages

The Doctrine of Substitution: An Erroneous Teaching *A Compilation*

This is an exposé of Christianity’s erroneous doctrine of “Substitution.” Though it is widely accepted, it is not the teaching of Scripture. This is a compilation of authors, including: *A.P. Adams, Vladimir Gelesnoff, Andrew J. Jukes, A.E. Knoch.*

“The best book I’ve read in ten years.” – Richard Kirsch

The Bloody Truth

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Chapter 3 – Passover and the Ten Plagues

by – Stephen Hill

When we picture the first Passover, many of us think only of the Hebrews hurriedly eating a meal with their belts fastened, sandals on, and staffs in hand. We recall the lamb's blood painted on the doorframes and lintels, protecting each household from the final plague. But there is a detail often overlooked – one that reveals something stunning about God's intentions.

God wasn't just sparing His people that night. He was declaring war on the gods of Egypt. The plagues were not random disasters – they were deliberate strikes against Egypt's most revered deities.

This was Passover – not as a quiet dinner of religious tradition, but as an act of cosmic confrontation. And in the first-century Jewish mind, it was impossible to think of blood without thinking of that night.

THE TEN COSMIC CONFRONTATIONS

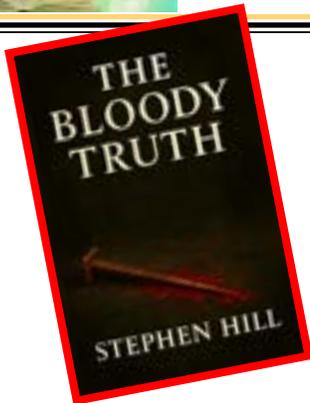
In Exodus 12:12, God declares plainly,

On all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD.

Each plague targeted a specific deity in Egypt's vast pantheon:

1. Water to blood – A blow to Hapi, the god of the Nile and fertility.
2. Frogs – Humiliation for Heqet, the frog-headed goddess of childbirth.
3. Gnats – Power over Geb, the god of the earth.
4. Flies – Defiance against Khepri, the beetle-headed god of creation.
5. Livestock disease – Judgment on Hathor and Apis, the cow and bull deities.
6. Boils – Defeat of Sekhmet, the goddess of healing.
7. Hail – Authority over Nut, goddess of the sky.

Check out a **NEW BOOK!**



The Bloody Truth

(Pre-publication notice)

by — Stephen Hill

Blood runs like a crimson thread through the pages of Scripture – from the first sacrifice in Eden to the death of Christ. But what if its purpose has been misunderstood for centuries? What if blood was never about appeasing a wrathful God, but about healing, cleansing and reversing the curse of sin and death?

The Bloody Truth uncovers one of the Bible's most profound and shocking reversals: that God Himself supplied the antidote to humanity's greatest disease.

Through vivid storytelling and careful attention to Scripture, this book reveals how the Old Testament sacrifices pointed not to divine anger, but to a divine cure. It shows why Christ's blood was poured out, not to satisfy vengeance, but to restore life, reconcile creation, and draw us near to God.

This is not another book of theological jargon. It is a bold journey into the heart of God's plan—a plan that overturns human assumptions about punishment, atonement, and the very nature of salvation. If you've ever wrestled with questions about why blood is so central in the Bible, or if you've longed for a picture of God that is consistent with love, justice, and grace, this book will open your eyes to a truth both ancient and revolutionary.

Pre-Publication Sale



8. Locusts – Supremacy over Neper, god of grain.
9. Darkness – Humiliation for Ra, the sun god.
10. Death of the firstborn – Final blow to Pharaoh himself, considered the divine son of Ra and a living god.

Every plague was a cosmic challenge – a public dismantling of Egypt’s claim that their gods ruled the natural and spiritual realms.

THE FINAL TEST OF ALLEGIANCE

By the time the tenth plague approached, God required something unthinkable from the Hebrew slaves: to slaughter the very animals the Egyptians worshipped as gods.

In Exodus 8:25-27, Moses explains to Pharaoh that Israel cannot sacrifice “*in the land*” because what they offer is an abomination to the Egyptians; and if they were seen doing so, they would surely be stoned to death.

The lambs and rams represented deities like Amun and Khnum, often depicted with rams’ heads and considered two of Egypt’s most powerful gods. For the Hebrews to kill these animals publicly, smear their blood on their homes, and roast the meat for a communal meal was a direct and dangerous declaration: “We serve the LORD, the Most High – not Egypt’s gods.”

When the Hebrews painted lamb’s blood on their doorframes, they weren’t just obeying an odd ritual. They were taking a stand that could have cost them their lives if Pharaoh’s soldiers had intervened.

The Jewish historian Josephus, in *Antiquities of the Jews* (Book II, Chapter 14), records that Moses commanded the Hebrew people to select and sacrifice lambs openly, in full view of their Egyptian masters. This was not a private ritual behind closed doors – it was public, intentional defiance. The lamb was a sacred animal to the Egyptians; slaughtering it and smearing its blood on the doorframes was an unmistakable declaration of their full allegiance to the God Who is superior to all lesser gods and powers.

Ancient Egyptian religion considered certain animals to be incarnations of deities. To kill them was blasphemy. For God to require His people to sacrifice and eat what their oppressors worshiped was to demand a decisive act of faith – faith in the One Who could protect them from the wrath of Egypt’s gods and the death sweeping through the land that night.

That first Passover night was the ultimate loyalty test. Every household had to choose: obey the voice of the LORD and defy Egypt’s gods, or cling to the safety of blending in. Faith meant risk – visible, bloody, undeniable risk.

And in that risk, God’s glory shone brightest. The

(see [PLAGUES](#), page 9148)



70 pages

The Celestial Realm: Seeing the Unseen ***(A Study of Our Real Enemy)***

by — Stephen Hill

God’s creation is infinite and unfathomable, and the grandeur of the universe leaves us in awe and with many questions as we live our lives on earth and seek out answers about our future, celestial home. Are we alone in the universe? Is there any merit to the notion of other gods and religions? Are Hollywood’s depictions of Satan and demons accurate? Is there more to the meaning of salvation and Christ’s victory than we’ve been led to believe?

These questions and more are answered in this book, which reveals much about the celestial realm that comprises the vast majority of the Father’s creation and awaits us as our true and final habitation. You are likely to be both challenged and enlightened as you read through this short book, and the end result will be a much greater understanding of the cosmos, the “big picture,” and your own role as a participant in The Most High’s plan.



The Bloody Truth

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Chapter 4 – More Historical Background

by – Stephen Hill

Nearly two thousand years before Christ's blood ran down the beams of a Roman stake, another night of blood stood at the center of God's plan – a night when slaves walked free, Egypt's gods fell silent, and the Adversary was humiliated in full view of earthly and heavenly spectators.

In Numbers 3:13, Yahweh declares that all of the firstborn of Israel – both man and beast – became His because He hallowed them (set them apart for Himself) by smiting all of the firstborn in the land of Egypt. The shocking fact is this: the deliverance and continued life of the Hebrew children was possible because only the Egyptian firstborn were killed, thus sealing their freedom.

BLOOD AS A BARRIER AGAINST DEATH

In his work *Antiquities*,¹ Josephus notes that the blood on the Hebrew doorposts was not to inform God about who belonged to Him (He already knew), but was a signal to the destroyer to pass over those homes. The Hebrew doorway became a boundary line: on one side, life preserved; on the other, death unrestrained.

Even early “church fathers” – like Justin Martyr and Irenaeus, while not fully opposed to the theory of penal substitutionary atonement – echoed the notion that Passover blood was a symbol of victory over death, not a legal settlement. They leaned heavily on the imagery of the Exodus as a parallel to Christ's triumphal act, as did other Patristic writings.

This matches the pattern woven throughout Scripture: blood serves as a protective seal, a life-preserving marker in a realm under the shadow of death. The same God Who told Noah to *kaphar* the ark with pitch so that no floodwaters could enter, told His people to cover their thresholds with blood so that no judgment could cross.

1. *Antiquities of the Jews*.

COVENANT BLOOD AND SHARED FATE

Josephus recalls that, during the Sinai covenant, Moses sprinkled blood on the altar and on the people (*Antiquities*, Book III, Ch. 8). In the ancient Near East, such an act bound both parties to the covenant with the same life-blood. The unspoken message was simple: “If this covenant is broken, let what happened to this animal happen to the one who breaks it.”

Blood was not a payment; it was the shared life of a binding relationship. Understood this way, the blood of the covenant was not about satisfying wrath – it was about pledging life and death solidarity between God and His people.

THE TEMPLE AS THE GREAT SLAUGHTERHOUSE OF LIFE

By the time of Jesus, the Jerusalem Temple was a place of astonishing sacrificial scale. The Mishnah records that, during Passover, priests could sacrifice hundreds of thousands of lambs in the space of a few hours.

The blood did not remain on the altar – it flowed into channels designed to carry it away, running down into the Kidron Valley in crimson streams. This was not seen as grotesque but as sacred necessity. In the worldview of the time, “*the life of the flesh is in the blood*” (Leviticus 17:11), and to pour it out before Yahweh was to acknowledge Him as the Giver and Sustainer of life.

PURIFICATION FROM DEATH – THE RED HEIFER

One of the most unusual rituals recorded by Josephus, referencing Numbers 19, was the sacrifice of the red heifer, whose ashes were mixed with water for purification from corpse defilement. In Jewish thought, contact with the dead was the most severe form of

impurity because death itself was the ultimate enemy. The fact that blood was involved in the ritual solution reinforces the principle: blood, carrying life, was God's chosen antidote to the contamination of death.

BLOOD AS THE ANTIDOTE FORESHADOWED

When seen through the lens of Jewish history, every major blood rite – from the ark's pitch to the Passover lamb, from covenant sprinklings to red heifer ashes – points toward one reality: blood was never really about “paying a penalty.” It was about protecting life from the forces of sin and death.

The people of Israel did not need protection from a

PROBLEM (continued from page 9143)

this present world, life is sustained only through the death of something else. The sacrificial system was a vivid reminder of this reality, woven into worship itself.

From the beginning, God used sacrifice to teach that life comes only through death – pointing to a greater sacrifice to come. However, as we'll see, the necessity of death for life is merely temporary and will one day be a thing of the past.

THE ANTIDOTE FORESHADOWED

Every lamb, goat or bull offered in Israel's history was more than a religious ritual – it was a living symbol of the antidote that humanity needed. Sin had corrupted; death had conquered. The only remedy was innocence for sin, life for death. The blood of a spotless animal represented innocent life, and blood is unique in that it embodies both the physical *and* the

wrathful Father; they needed protection from corruption and mortality itself. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was not looking for a victim to punish – He was preparing an *antidote* to restore His creation.

Chapter 4 Key Takeaways

- ◆ Blood marked boundaries between life and death, not wrath and forgiveness.
- ◆ Covenant blood symbolized solidarity between God and His people.
- ◆ Every Old Covenant ritual foreshadowed blood as God's antidote to death. **BSN**

TOPICS:

Major: Antidote; Blood; Purification; Sacrifice
Minor: Passover; Restoration; Temple

spiritual.

These sacrifices were never meant to be permanent solutions. They were placeholders – year after year – until the true antidote could be given once for all. That day came when our Champion shed *His* blood for all of creation.

Chapter 2 Key Takeaways

- ◆ “Atonement” (Hebrew, *kaphar*) means protective covering, not payment.
- ◆ Sacrifices cleansed a sacred space and preserved God's presence among His people.
- ◆ God allowed multiple non-bloody offerings, showing His desire for faith, not payment. **BSN**

TOPICS:

Major: Antidote; Atonement; Champion; *Kaphar*; Sacrifice
Minor: Tabernacle; Temple



An Evening with ...

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Current authors: Mark D. Vogt, Norman P. Grubb, T. Austin-Sparks.

PLAGUES (continued from page 9145)

blood on their doorframes was both a shield from death and a banner declaring their trust in the One Who reigns over the Heavens and Earth.

MORE THAN HUMAN REDEMPTION

It's important to see the broader stage here. God's concern was not merely the liberation of one ethnic group from slavery, though He deeply loved His people. His goal was *cosmic* in scope.

He was demonstrating to the entire spiritual realm – both loyal and rebellious – that He alone is *El Elyon*, the Most High God. Egypt was the superpower of its day, a center of culture, religion and influence. By toppling its gods in plain sight, God sent a message to every nation and every spiritual power:

There is none like Me in all the Earth (Exodus 9:14).

THE PRIMITIVE VIEW AND ITS PURPOSE

The sacrificial system that God would later institute in the wilderness reflected a “primitive view” of God – not because God is primitive, but because He revealed Himself in stages, accommodating the spiritual maturity of His people at the time.¹

For ancient Israel, blood was not disgusting – it was life. They saw in every sacrifice the reality that their lives were sustained only through the death of another creature. And through repeated offerings, God

1. [Editor:] For more on this theme, see, – “The Primitive Image of God in the Hebrew Scriptures,” Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., [Bible Student's Notebook 1041](#)

was training them to understand two essential truths:

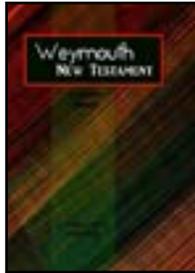
1. Life comes only through death.
2. The LORD alone is worthy of allegiance.

Chapter 3 Key Takeaways

- ◆ *The plagues were God's direct challenge to Egypt's gods.*
- ◆ *The blood on the doorframes was an act of allegiance and defiance, not a penalty payment.*
- ◆ *Passover reveals blood as protection and loyalty, not appeasement.* **BSN**

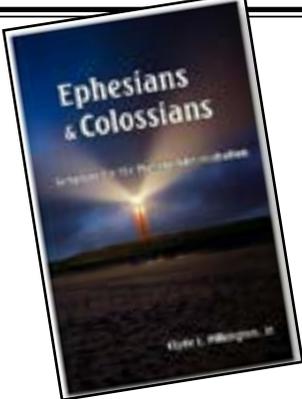
TOPICS:

Major: Blood; Passover; Plagues
Minor: Death; Egypt; Redemption



Weymouth New Testament in Modern Speech – The Resultant Greek Testament in English
(Reprint of the 1903 Edition)
225 pages
by — Richard Francis Weymouth

EPHESIANS, PHILIPPIANS AND COLOSSIANS IS A COMPLETE BIBLE IN ITSELF.
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by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.
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