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Forgiveness Demands Blood

9: 15-22

Forgiveness demands blood DIG: How were people saved during the Dispensation of the Torah? Describe the purpose of the animal sacrifices? What two things did God declare about His character when He sent Messiah to be the ransom for sin? How far back in time was Yeshua's superior sacrifice effective? What is necessary for a will to go into effect? What had to happen for Christ to release His inheritance to His fellow heirs? How does the writer of Hebrews show that bloodshed in the B'rit Chadashah was not unusual and only to be expected? What did Jesus identify as the confirming sign of the New Covenant on the night before His death?

REFLECT: How is Christ's mediation like a ransom for your soul? Were you a hostage? Hostage to what? What is the ransom price? Are those who lived and died before Jesus somehow covered by this ransom also (see Romans 3:25)? How is Messiah's death like a will made good for you? What is your inheritance? What puts the will in force? Why the emphasis on shed blood? What for? How extensive is the application? How effective?

There are three results of the **Messiah's** sacrifice. The second result of **His** sacrifice is the ratification of **a New Covenant**. In Chapter eight the author stated that the New Priesthood is based upon a better **covenant** (to see link click [Bm](#) - A Better Covenant). Now he will show how that **covenant** was signed.

Since **the blood of the Messiah cleanses our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God (9:14)**, certain things are true. First, **Messiah is the mediator of a New Covenant (Hebrews 9:15 CJB quoting Jeremiah 31:31 CJB)**. A **mediator** is one who intervenes between two people either to make peace and friendship or to ratify a covenant; in this case, ratifying **the New Covenant** is seen to be in contrast with **the First Covenant** (the Mosaic Covenant). While the Mosaic Covenant was able to point out 613 transgressions, it could never bring the inheritance of the promised blessing of complete forgiveness of **sin** and eternal life. That is why **a New Covenant** was needed . . . and **He is the mediator of this Covenant**.

Secondly, the **death** of **Jesus** paid **the ransom** for the redemption of **the sins committed under the First Covenant**. The truth is that the sacrifices during the Dispensation of the Torah (see the commentary on [Exodus Da - The Dispensation of the Torah](#)) did not remove the **sins** of the righteous of the TaNaKh. The Hebrew word *kippur* for atonement simply means *to cover*. Animal **blood** could not remove **the sins** of the righteous of the TaNaKh. It only covered them temporarily. That is why when the righteous of the TaNaKh died, they could not go directly to heaven. Instead they went down to Paradise or Abraham's side (one section of sh'ol), and waited for the **death** of **Yeshua**. It was *then* that **the sins** of the righteous of the TaNaKh were removed. When **Messiah** died, **He** did not simply die for all **the sins** to be committed after **His death**, **He** also died for all **the sins** that were committed *before His death* . . . for **the sins** committed under **the First Covenant**. The same point is made by Rabbi Sha'ul: **God presented Him as a propitiation** (Greek *hilasterion*, meaning *the covering of the ark that was sprinkled with the blood of a sacrifice on the Day of Atonement*) **through faith in His blood, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His restraint God passed over the sins previously committed (Romans 3:25 HCSB).**²³⁴

Consequently, the righteous of the TaNaKh **who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance - now that He has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the First Covenant (9:15 CJB)**. The **death** of **Jesus** provided the means for **their promised eternal inheritance**. These words can be traced throughout the TaNaKh as they outline one its major themes. **God** promised **Adam** eternal life, conditional on obedience (**Genesis 2:16-17** and **3:22**). **ADONAI's** covenant with **Noah** includes many promises and is called **everlasting (Genesis 9:16)**. **YHVH** promised **Abraham** and **his** seed the Land of Isra'el **forever (Genesis 13:15)**, and the term inherit is first used in the Bible in connection with this promise (**Genesis 15:7**). **Ha'Shem's** promises to **Avraham** are reconfirmed in the covenant with **Moshe (Galatians 3:6 to 4:7**, constitute an indispensable commentary on this verse), but **people's sins** disqualified them from receiving what had been promised. Those who accept **Yeshua's** eternal dealing with **sin**, as explained in these chapters, **may receive the promised eternal inheritance.**²³⁵

A will demands a death: Now the writer switches in his thinking from the concept of a **Covenant** to the concept of a **will**. The connection between the two is the concept of inheritance. A **will** provides for an inheritance. **For where there is a will, there must necessarily be produced evidence of its maker's death, since a will goes into effect only upon death; it never has force while its maker is still alive (9:16-17 CJB)**. The Greek word for **covenant**, *diatheke*, closely corresponds to our present-day **will**. A will does not take place until the one who made it **dies**. Until that time, its benefits and provisions are

only promises, and necessarily in the future. The point the writer is making here is simple and obvious to us today. But its relevance to the Torah was anything but obvious to the Jews being addressed here. So the writer briefly explains how it applies. Building on **verse 15**, he is saying that **God** gave an eternal inheritance to Isra'el in the form of **a covenant**, or **a will**. As with any **will**, it was only a type of promissory note until **the provider of the will died**. At this point, no mention is made of who **the deceased** is or how **Christ** fulfills that role.²³⁶

Now, a **will** is one-sided, but a covenant is two-sided. Obviously it was not **God**, who set the terms of these covenants with **Adam**, **Abraham**, and **Moshe**, who died. Rather, it was, in every instance, the receiver of **Ha'Shem's** covenant who died - not actual physical death, but spiritual death through identification with the shed **blood**. In the **God's** covenant with **Moses**, the dead animals represent the people of Isra'el as having died to their former **sinful** way of life; while the sprinkled **blood** represents the new life offered through **the Torah - the life is in the blood** (see the commentary on **Leviticus Da - The Life is in the Blood**). The necessary connection between **deaths** and covenants in the TaNaKh means, literally, *to cut a covenant*. One day **ADONAI** would *cut a covenant* with **Abram** that **his** descendants would inherit **the Land**, then **Abram** cut animals in pieces and saw a **smoking firepot with a blazing torch** pass between them (see the commentary on **Genesis Eg - I am the LORD, Who Brought You Out of Ur of the Chaldeans to Give You This Land**).²³⁷



Forgiveness demands blood: Now the writer illustrates the principle and reverts back from the concept of a **will** to the concept of a **covenant**. The background for these verses can be found in **Exodus 24:3-8**. **This is why the First Covenant too was inaugurated with blood (9:18 CJB)**. Here, too, a **death** had taken place, but it was the **death** of an animal. The Mosaic Covenant was ratification by the shedding of **blood**, but the **blood** was animal **blood**. So it was not so shocking that second covenant should be **ratified** the same way. But **Yeshua** ratified **the New Covenant** with **His** own **blood**. **His blood** being **better**

than animal **blood**. As in the case of the Mosaic ratification, where **the death** of an animal gave validity to **the First Covenant** and made it unchangeable, the same thing is true of **the New Covenant**.

After Moshe had proclaimed every command of the Torah to the people, he took the blood of the calves with some water and used scarlet wool and hyssop to sprinkle both the scroll itself and all the people (9:19 CJB). The Testator of the First Covenant was YHVH, for it was God who was the source of salvation during the Dispensation of the Torah. But the LORD was not yet ready to come in the Person of His Son and die on the cross for mankind. Therefore, He provided a substitute that would represent Him in death, a death that would make the Covenant effective. The substitute was an animal. In fact, according to the Torah, one must almost say that everything is purified with blood (9:22a).²³⁸

Moses used a solemn blood ceremony to seal the First Covenant after he had spoken the words of the Torah (Exodus Chapters 20 through 23). Then he ratified the First Covenant by sprinkling both the Book of the Covenant and the people with blood (see the commentary on Exodus [Ek - The Ratification of the Sinai Covenant](#)). He used the blood of an animal. This sprinkling of blood meant that the people were to obey, and if they obeyed, ADONAI would bless them.²³⁹

And he said, "This is the blood of the covenant that God has ordained for you" (Hebrews 9:20 CJB quoting Exodus 24:8 CJB). The blood was the confirming sign. Do you remember the startling words of Yeshua: This cup is the New Covenant in My blood, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of Me (Matthew 26:27-28; Mark 14:23-24 Luke 22:20; First Corinthians 11:25). Messiah was ratifying the New Covenant after the pattern of Exodus 24:8, except that it would be confirmed through the shedding of His own blood, symbolizing His atoning death for sin.

Likewise, he sprinkled with the blood both the Tabernacle and all the things used in tis ceremonies (9:21 CJB). Since the Tabernacle was not yet built when Moshe ratified the First Covenant, his sprinkling of both the Tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry with blood were obviously meant to be anticipatory. The blood he sprinkled at the initiation of the First Covenant continued, in a sense, to be sprinkled by the priests of the Tabernacle, and later the Temple, as long as the First Covenant was in effect.

The purpose of **the blood** was to symbolize sacrifice for **sin**, which brought about cleansing from **sin**. **Indeed, without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins**

(9:22b). Forgiveness is very, very costly. **The Father** doesn't forgive **sin** by looking down and saying, "Well, It's all right. Since I love you so much, I'll overlook your **sin**." **ADONAI's** righteousness and holiness will not allow **Him** to do that. **Sin** demands payment by **death**. And the only **death** great enough to pay for all of the **sins** of mankind is the **death** of **His Son**. **And if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved (Romans 10:9)**. God's great love for us will not lead **Him** to overlook our **sin**, but it *has* led **Him** to provide the payment for our **sin**, as **Yochanan 3:16** so beautifully reminds us. **YHVH** cannot ignore our **sin**; but **He** will **forgive** our **sin** if we trust in **the death** of **His Son** for that **forgiveness**.²⁴⁰