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BLOOD ON THE ALTAR

When the Jews offered sacrifices; we note that God had something to say about what happened to the blood of the sacrifices. Eight times in Leviticus, we read where God expected the priests (or Moses) to put blood on the horns of the altar, and then the rest of the blood was to be poured *"at the bottom of the altar"* (Lev. 4:7, 18, 25, 30, 34, 5:9, 8:15, 9:9). As I read these passages and thought about the animals offered, I got to thinking that it would not take long for this area to stink and, on occasion, have blood pooled up around the altar after the priests had offered many sacrifices. In the days of Solomon when the Temple was built, the Bible speaks of 22,000 oxen, and 120,000 sheep offered to God (I Kings 8:63)! Think of feast days such as the Passover and other times when the multitudes had gathered and offered their sacrifices! Can we fathom the volume of blood that poured from that altar? Is there any

wonder why God required the numerous washings by the priests and commanded them to wash their hands and feet before going into the Tabernacle and Temple? Their hands and feet would have been coated in blood! I wonder how long it would be before the laver itself, once filled with water for their purification, had become blood-red? Why did God require blood in connection with the sacrifices? *"And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission"* (Heb. 9:22). Blood was necessary in God's plan. These people needed to see the price of sin. They needed to understand that the consequences of sin were bloody and ugly. They needed to know that sin affected more than just the individual and that, yes, sometimes the innocent will suffer for the deeds of the wicked! Don't we also need to understand the price of sin? Don't we also need to see that

the consequences of our sins are bloody, ugly, and affect other people besides ourselves? Don't we need an object lesson that our sins will hurt innocent people? I believe if we truly faced what our sins do, then sin would not look the same to us anymore! It would repulse us, and we would want to get away from it. Just like when Judas threw the money back at the chief priests and elders in the Temple after Jesus was condemned to death (Matt. 27:1-5), we also would run away from our sins when we understand what it did to the innocent One! Remember that Christ, the "*Lamb of God*" (Jn. 1:29), died as the sacrifice for man's sin. He suffered, and His blood poured out from His various wounds as He died on the cross (Zech. 13:1)! Look with the eye of faith to His sacrifice and understand "*How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*" (Heb. 9:14). Yes, the "*Just*" suffered for the "*unjust*" (I Pet. 3:18)! His blood was shed "*for the remission of sins*" (Matt. 26:28). After He died, a cruel soldier pierced His side "*and forthwith came there out blood and water*" (Jn. 19:34). Every time blood was shed and poured at the altar in Old Testament days, it pointed to the blood of the innocent One whose blood could take away sin (Heb. 9:24-26, 10:4)! Christ's blood

poured down to the ground and pooled around the cross for a time. Perhaps folks there stepped in it? We know there were many gathered around His cross (Jn. 19:24-27; Mk. 15:29-32; Matt. 27:47-49). I am sure some Roman soldiers had Christ's literal blood on their hands and clothes since some argued and gambled over His bloody garment (Matt. 27:35, Jn. 19:24), and others had whipped and beat Jesus' back (Matt. 27:26; Mk. 15:15; Jn. 19:1)! No doubt Christ's blood could be seen at the whipping post, and from here, one could follow His blood trail to Golgotha! As Christ was suspended between heaven and earth, we can see in our mind's eye Jesus' blood drip down and pool at the ground! What a bloody altar the cross is! The people of the Old Testament knew something about blood and something about the cost of sin. Do we appreciate that cost? Jesus died so we might live (II Cor. 5:14-15; Rom. 12:1-2). His stripes heal us (Isa. 53:5; I Pet. 2:24)! His blood cleanses us (Rev. 1:5, 7:14)! His blood purchased the church (Acts 20:28; I Pet. 1:18-19)! Have we ever paused to consider the actual cost of sin and the magnificence of Christ's sacrifice? When the Jewish people looked at the bloody altar at the Tabernacle or Temple, they came to realize the reality of sin. What will we do when we look at Christ's blood at the cross? – Jarrod Jacobs. "**Seek**

And Ye Shall Find” In the sermon on the mount, Jesus tells the listeners (and us) to “*seek and ye shall find*” (Matt. 7:7). In teaching this, Jesus was teaching those present (and us) to seek things that are of lasting benefit. In addition to this, please read Matthew 6:33, where Christ said that God would make sure we do not lack earthly necessities if we are seeking God’s kingdom and His righteousness. Luke 12:24 teaches us about the ravens and how the Father provides for them. He also watches and sees the sparrows that fall from their nests. Are we not of more value than the sparrows (Matt. 10:29)? Of course, we are! Then will not God be patient with us as we seek Him? When we seek, we will find! Seeking implies action and diligence, and so let us never quit. When we seek the Lord, we will find Him (Acts 17:27)! Seeking and finding is of the utmost importance! Since this is true, let us also remember to seek forgiveness from God. Jesus spoke the parable of the prodigal son to show people that forgiveness is possible for the one who seeks it. The prodigal son realized that he was far better off with his father’s servants than in the pig sty and so went back to his father to seek the blessings he had lost. Guess what? He found them (Lk. 15:22-24)! Jesus spoke this parable to show the Pharisees and scribes (Lk. 15:2) that a lost soul or a child of God in error can be forgiven when he seeks it!

Through His loving kindness and mercy, God receives us when we return (Lk. 15:11-32; Acts 8:22). When we seek the kingdom of Heaven we will find it. We know this is true because our perfect Father in Heaven is not going to give us something that is going to harm us but will give us what we need (Matt. 7:9-11). Let us not be lazy, but seek God and live for God so we can be in Heaven one day. – JD Espinoza. **Pointed Paragraphs** “Instead of recognizing that God was working out through them his plan for the redemption of the world, the Jews concluded God cared for no other people. The promise to Abraham and their own prophets should have taught them the truth, but they were too much wrapped up in themselves to see the truth.” - Kingdom of Promise and Prophecy, p. 31 - R.L. Whiteside (1869-1951)

BIBLE TRIVIA

C H A L L E N G E

DIRECTIONS: After searching through your Bible, circle which answer is correct.

1. Jesus said He spoke in parables "because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they ____."

- a) Speak
- b) Understand
- c) Whistle
- d) Breakdance

2. Seed sown beside the road is snatched away by the ____ one.

- a) Crazy
- b) Fidgety
- c) Shy
- d) Evil

3. Wheat and tares will be allowed to grow together until the ____.

- a) Harvest
- b) Birthday
- c) Evening
- d) Sunset

4. When the mustard seed is full grown, it is larger than the garden plants and becomes a ____.

- a) Tortleneck
- b) Harmonica
- c) Swatch
- d) Tree

5. The ____ of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three pecks of flour until it was all leavened.

- a) Kingdom
- b) Jello
- c) Noodles
- d) Pudding

6. Jesus did not speak to the crowds without a ____.

- a) Powerpoint
- b) Lazerpointer
- c) Pulpit
- d) Parable

7. "I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things ____ since the foundation of the world."

- a) Silly
- b) Fantastic
- c) Hidden
- d) Frightening

8. The man who found the treasure hidden in the field sold all he had and bought the field from ____ over it.

- a) Fear
- b) Joy
- c) Suspicion
- d) Confusion

9. The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine ____.

- a) Turtles
- b) Fannypacks
- c) Pearls
- d) Frogs

10. At the end of the age, ____ will take out the wicked from among the righteous.

- a) God
- b) Jesus
- c) Holy Spirit
- d) Angels

- 1) B. Reference: Mt. 13:13
 2) D. Reference: Mt. 13:19
 3) A. Reference: Mt. 13:30
 4) D. Reference: Mt. 13:31-32
 5) A. Reference: Mt. 13:33
 6) D. Reference: Mt. 13:34
 7) C. Ps. 78:2; Mt. 13:35
 8) B. Mt. 13:44
 9) C. Mt. 13:45
 10) D. Mt. 13:49