

Life for a Life: Blood Atonement

The primary reason why all sin, including the sin of murder, does not require the death penalty that was required under **The Law** is that Jesus Christ, by the blood of the New Covenant has made full atonement for sin. If he hasn't, we are all liable for the noose. If the **new covenant** must carry the burden of the old **Law**, we all of us must pay for our sins with our lives, because **THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH**. Only through the blood of Jesus can we escape.

The blood atonement of Genesis 9.5-6 requires bloodshed for bloodshed. That is also spelled out in Numbers 35.33 *So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye are, for blood defileth the land, and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it.* And so Deuteronomy 19.21: *life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth*--which Jesus sets aside in the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5.38-39: ***You Have Heard it Said . . . But I Say*** The Old Law required **BLOOD ATONEMENT**. For minor offenses, the sacrifice of a bird or animal would do. For major offenses, the blood of the human offender was required. Under **The Law**, some 16 offenses mandate the death penalty.

The basic fact of the New Covenant is that God's Son made a blood atonement to his Father which covers all of our sins, including the sin of the murderer. Jesus says: *this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.* (Matthew 26.28) That is what made The Law obsolete. Hebrews 9 & 10 describes the difference between the blood of Jesus Christ and the blood of the sacrificial animals--the spiritual gulf between the **new covenant** and the **old covenant**--*For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats could take away sins.* (Hebrews 10.4)

True Judgment versus The Illusion of Justice

In most of the Old Testament times, before the time of the prophets, there is no faith in a life beyond this one, no belief in a judgment after death which will rectify the manifest injustice of this world. So judgment and justice must take place in this world. They are left with the vain hope that some day soon the wicked will be punished and the good rewarded. Their childish confidence that God will immediately punish evil and reward good is replaced by questions they cannot answer: *Why do the wicked prosper ? Why do good men suffer bad things ?* The Book of Job wrestles with that question. Christians have a different understanding and a different hope. That is why we leave justice to the Judgment of God.

In Matthew 5.22 where Jesus makes angry name-calling the equivalent of murder, he also specifies a penalty, the *danger of hell fire*, which means a judgment beyond the arbitrary judgments of this world. He equates lust with adultery but he does not allow the woman taken in adultery to be stoned to death. He goes far beyond The Law in his strict definition of sins, but the penalty is spiritual--heaven and hell. It is no longer a criminal law to be enforced by the nearest rock pile.

Once in a while our human injustice system manages to put a murderer to death, if he doesn't have a million dollars to pay the lawyers. *You can't hang a million dollars*, as O.J. Simpson proved once again. Out of 24,000 yearly homicides, a handful of men are put to death, 20 years later, when they have gone as far as they can go with the lawyers paid by the state. Out of 25 million serious crimes committed every year, a fraction are punished, along with all those who are relentlessly pursued for failure to pay the state what the state says it is owed. The State itself wages war and kills millions and no one is held to account for it. Is this God's Justice ? It is rather the Illusion of Justice. If we believe in a just and merciful God, who will rightly judge all of us, we don't have to endorse the sorry substitutes for *justice* that this world has to offer.

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