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SPRINKLING-- BUT NOT BAPTISM

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF HEBREWS
NUMBER 69
HEBREWS 9:18-21

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HEBREWS 9:18 "Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood." As we read verses like this we realize that in the Old Testament worship at the Tabernacle blood was sprinkled all over the place. Many people read all of this and they don't have a clue as to what was going on. This verse explains the shadow blood of the Old Testament, or more correctly named, the old covenant. The word "whereupon" is an adverb from hothen and a better translation would be "From which fact" or "for which reason." This adverb is referring back to the facts given in verse 17. In verse 17 we saw that the validity of the new covenant depended upon the spiritual death of Christ for our sins. And that is exactly what Christ did on the cross for us. Keep this in mind. The work Christ did in those final three hours on the cross was the greatest work ever done by anyone in the history of the world. Our salvation was wrought by his work on that cross. This is what is being referred to by this adverb hothen.

Real Blood And Figurative Blood

The real blood of animals ratified the validity of the Mosaic Law. That animal blood ratified the Mosaic Law, it validated the Mosaic Law. But it was the spiritual death of Christ that ratified the new covenant and that is why we call it figurative blood.

Next we have the words "Neither the first" and this is from oude protos and it means "not even the first covenant." It calls the Mosaic Law the first covenant because it came first. It was operative before the new covenant came along. Next we have the words "was dedicated" and this is a perfect passive, indicative of egkainizo and it means to inaugurate. So thus far, we have "From which fact, not even the first covenant has been inaugurated." This perfect tense is a perfect which gathers into one completed action all that went on in the long process of the completion of that first covenant. This inauguration always occurred by the sprinkling of blood and this inauguration has been completed. Now how was it completed? The answer is animal blood. A lot of animals were slaughtered throughout those many years. The words "without blood" come from choris haima.

So the sentence says, "From which fact, not even the first covenant has been inaugurated without blood."

Summary

1. The shadow blood of animals was used to inaugurate the first covenant. The first covenant is the Mosaic Law and it was a shadow covenant. Therefore, shadows were used to inaugurate it. The blood used to inaugurate this first covenant was animal blood and it was real blood. The new covenant also must be inaugurated with blood, only this time the blood equals redemption, reconciliation and propitiation. Many people get very emotional about blood, but remember, we have a redemption that lends itself to understanding rather than to emotion.
2. This shadow blood of the animal pointed to the reality of Christ's work on the cross bearing our sins and being judged for our sins.

3. So again we have the representative analogy of the physical death and the physical blood of the animal on the altar, and the spiritual death of Christ on the cross. No one can ever understand the death of Christ unless he realizes that he died twice on the cross. His spiritual death was related to caring for our sins, and his physical death came because his work was finished and because he wanted to give us an example of the victory of death which is to be followed by resurrection and life with God forever. His death and resurrection proved he was God and vindicated everything he had done on the cross. It is one package and can't be separated.
4. Immediately when you see the animal slaughtered and the blood used for the sacrifice you say to yourself, "This is not an end in itself. This is a picture of something greater that is coming."
5. Moses sprinkled animal blood in dedication. (Exodus 24:3-8) Moses told them all these things and please notice their reply-- "We will do it." Now Moses knew them fairly well and he probably realized then that many of them would never live up to those things. So to be sure they would have it, Moses wrote it down. So Moses read these things to them and then sprinkled the people. (We never have had that ceremony in our church yet. Maybe we ought to have it.) He gave them a cooling off period and that night he wrote it down. Please notice that in accepting this covenant, their volition was involved. They had two shots at these truths. When they first heard it from the lips of Moses, they all said, "We will do it." Then he wrote it down and read it to them again and they said, "We will do it." Please notice that volition is always involved. The first issue in accepting a covenant is always volition. The only difference in their covenant and ours is that ours is dedicated with the blood of Christ.
6. Shadow blood consecrated the first covenant. And just as the animal blood consecrated the first, so the blood of Christ consecrated the new covenant for the church.
7. Animal blood validated the Mosaic Law. The expiatory sacrifice of Christ's spiritual death on the cross validated the new covenant. This was illustrated by the tearing of the veil in the temple.

HEBREWS 9:19 "For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people." This is a reference to the historic dedication about which we have read in Exodus 24:3-8.

We have an aorist, passive, participle of laleo for the word "to speak." Moses is not the subject here and the translator evidently didn't know any classical Greek. This is a genitive absolute and this is a temporal participle. The main verb is "to sprinkle" and what we have here is antecedent to the main verb. Therefore, this should be translated "For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses."

Moses spoke twice. Once he spoke off the cuff and immediately the people said, "We will do it." Then that night Moses wrote it down and read it to them again the next day. Moses was a genius and he was able to do a thing like this. This is why God had picked him out to write the first part of the Bible. So these people said "yes" on two occasions before the blood was sprinkled. These people said "yes" to something that no one has ever done or could ever do. No one has ever been able to keep perfectly the Mosaic Law, no one except Jesus Christ. Moses spoke this to all the people, according to the law. This is kata nomos, which means according to the norms and standards of the law. And it says "by means of Moses." So thus far we have this--"For when every commandment had been spoken according to the law by means of Moses." Then he sprinkled the blood on them and this was the inauguration of the covenant. The words "he took" is an aorist, active, participle of lambano and should be translated "having taken." Notice it says pas laos and this means all the people. The blood of the young bulls was for Moses himself, and the blood of the goats was for the people. Remember, when Moses did this there was as yet no Tabernacle, no altar, no Holy of Holies and no priesthood. That is why it says he had young men offer the sacrifices. The priesthood had not yet been established.

The words "with water" are very interesting here. The water represented doctrine as in Ezekiel 16:9 compared to Ephesians 5:26. It is so used in Exodus 15:25 where bitter experiences are made sweet. In Psalm 23:2 the water is used for doctrine that provides rest and refreshment for the believer. The doctrine was dedicated by blood. The blood was thick and the water made it much easier to use. Doctrine always brings ease in living and in all the accomplishments of the Christian life. This phrase "and scarlet wool" should be translated "with a scarlet woolen cloth." Moses would collect the blood diluted with water in the scarlet woolen cloth and then would scatter it, sprinkling all the people. The word "hyssop" is a plant that would absorb the water and blood and was used to sprinkle the people and the book and the altar. So we have here the two sprinklers that Moses used. In Lev. 14:4-7 this same means of cleansing was used for a leper. When blood was sprinkled in the Old Testament it was accompanied with scarlet woolen cloths and hyssop reeds. Psalm 51:7 says "purify me with hyssop" and John 1:1-7 refers to the real cleansing Christ brings.

Water Represents Doctrine

Water has no power in itself. It always represents doctrine. The scarlet, woolen cloth and the hyssop were used to apply it. Numbers 19:6 says they were used. First the blood and then the sprinkling of the blood which portrays rebound. In fact, every time you confess a sin, you are sprinkling the blood. The word "sprinkled" is the aorist, active, indicative of rantizo. Once sprinkled, it was their spiritual heritage from then on. When he sprinkled the blood on the scroll, it means it was there from then on. The word for scroll or book is biblion.

So this is what we have here in this verse--"For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses to all the people according to the law, after he had taken the blood of young bulls and goats, with water and scarlet woolen cloths and hyssop, he sprinkled both the written scrolls and the people."

The water was used to make the blood sprinkle easier. Water actually made the sprinklers work. Doctrine makes the gospel work in your daily living. The reason you can learn doctrine you already know some doctrine. The complexity of grace is how grace is applied to every experience of your life both here and for eternity. (Water, which is doctrine, makes your soul and spirit understand the truth.) Now all of this ritual was necessary for it was leading up to reality.

Look At The Destination

You will miss the whole meaning of all of this unless you see where it is leading. They had to stop at that curtain and the reason is this. You and I are going to live in that Holy of Holies with Christ, therefore, we don't want all those priests cluttering up that holy place. So Hebrews 10:19 will say, "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." Jesus Christ lived there and that's the shekinah glory. Then verse 20 goes on to say, "By a new and living way." There never was a royal family before, but now we are royalty. Verse 21 will say that we will have our own High Priest and his name is Jesus Christ. In verse 22 we have the picture of having our hearts sprinkled and this is a picture of how doctrine cleanses the life and soul.

HEBREWS 9:20 "Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you." The word "saying" is the present, active, participle of lego and it means every time the blood was sprinkled this was said over and over again. "This the blood" and no verb there to give emphasis to the importance of it. Houtos haima, this the blood. Then we have the genitive singular of diatheke, meaning the covenant. Next we have "which the God" from hos ho Theos and this indicated the God with whom they were familiar. The words "hath enjoined" is an aorist, active, indicative of entellomai and it means to command. God is the one who does the commanding. Then we have pros su which means "pertaining to you."

So we have in this verse "Saying, this the blood of the covenant which the God hath commanded pertaining to you."

Their Constant Responsibility

Through the use of the sprinkling of blood, the Jews were responsible, until the cross, to portray in shadow form the coming reality. But they got lost in the shadows, they got involved in the ritual and then never moved on out to the reality.

SPRINKLED WITH BLOOD

(This they did hundreds and thousands of times - a shadow or picture of something coming)

But this was once for all.

HEBREWS 9:21 "Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry."

The word translated "moreover" is from the conjunction kai and should be translated "and also" (at a later time) for the Tabernacle had not been built yet. We have the word "sprinkled" and this is an aorist, active, indicative of rantizo. Then we have "by means of blood." The tabernacle and all the equipment in it. The tongs, the fleshhooks, the bowls, the spoons, the basins, the shovels, the ash pans and every single piece of furniture. Literally it means "all the equipment of the ministry."

We read this formal dedication in Exodus 40 when the Tabernacle had been completed, it says, "Moses dedicated it with blood."