

THE SACREDNESS OF LIFE AND BLOOD

Note to the speaker:

Emphasize that life is a marvelous and sacred gift from God, to be treasured each day and viewed as Jehovah views it. The sanctity of life and blood are linked because blood is intimately involved in the life processes. Show that blood is sacred. (Hebrew and Greek words are included to clarify the various terms used)

JEHOVAH GOD IS THE SOURCE OF LIFE (6 min.)

Life has always existed because Jehovah has always been in existence (Ps 90:2)

He supplied the “dynamic energy” needed to create the universe (Isa 40:26)

Life on earth began when God superimposed the life principle on matter (Ge 1:11, 12, 20, 24; 2:7; *it-2* 246)

Earthly life resulted from a direct command of Jehovah, the Source of life; only life begets life (Ps 36:9)

Jehovah created living souls—animal and human

These souls (Hebrew, *ne'phesh*; Greek, *psy-khe'*) were physical bodies combined with spirit, or life-force (Hebrew, *ru'ach*; Greek, *pneu'ma*); this life was sustained by breathing (Hebrew, *nesha-mah*; Greek, *pno-e'*)

Blood is vital for animal and human life; it carries oxygen and nourishment throughout the body to sustain the life-force

In the Creator's view, blood stands for life: “The soul [or, life] of the flesh is in the blood” (Le 17:11-14)

God sanctified and blessed human life and blood (Ge 1:28, 31; 9:6, 7)

Should not this influence our thinking and actions?

JEHOVAH VIEWS BLOOD AS SACRED (5 min.)

Knowing that “the soul of the flesh is in the blood,” God ordained that blood could be used only in line with his purpose

After man's sin, Abel poured out animal blood in sacrifice to God (Ge 4:3-5)

Abel's sacrifice and faith led to Jehovah's approving him; Cain's course of life brought death to Abel and a curse from Jehovah to Cain (Heb 11:4; 1Jo 3:12)

In the past, Jehovah gave specific directions as to how blood was to be used, and often life was directly involved

At the time of the first Passover, in Egypt, the blood on the doorposts of Israelite homes was a means of protecting the firstborn inside from death

Under the Law covenant, God required animal sacrifices for the forgiveness of sins, with blood sprinkled upon the altar (Heb 9:22)

Except for when used in sacrifices, blood was to be poured out upon the ground; reflected recognition that life is from God (Le 17:13)

The blood sacrifices included in the Law pointed forward to a greater sacrifice to come—the ransom (Eph 1:7)

Jesus' blood was poured out once for all time as a ransom sacrifice for forgiveness of sin, leading to everlasting life

Knowing how and why Jesus died should enhance our appreciation for the role of blood in our salvation

JEHOVAH PROHIBITED MISUSE OF BLOOD (11 min.)

As God indicated to Noah after the Flood, blood is sacred (Ge 9:3-6)

Under the Law, if a man shed another's blood, a close relative as an “avenger of blood” could put the manslayer to death (Nu 35:21-25)

If death was caused accidentally, the manslayer could flee to a city of refuge for protection (*w95* 11/15 10-13)

First-century Christian governing body reemphasized the prohibition against misusing blood (Acts 15:28, 29; *it-1* 345-6)

When the sanctity of human life is violated by the spilling of blood, bloodguiltiness results

A Christian could become bloodguilty in various ways

By murder or other actions involving loss of life, including the support of bloodguilty organizations (Re 17:6)

By eating or drinking blood, whether as food or in medical treatment (Ac 15:20)

By refusing to preach the good news of the Kingdom, withholding the lifesaving information it contains (Ac 20:26, 27; *it-1* 346-7)

The world treats life as being cheap, which can be seen in its violent crime, wars, and much of what it considers to be entertainment

Abortion, the deliberate expulsion of an embryo or fetus, is often treated as mere birth control or a matter of convenience rather than as disrespect for life (*rs* 25-6)

Human life is precious even during the early stages of development after conception (Ps 139:13-16)

RECOGNIZE THE PURPOSE OF LIFE (6 min.)

Being created “in God's image,” humans have attributes like God's and the capacity for spirituality; are able to appreciate and worship their Creator (Ge 1:26, 27)

To hold life sacred, a person must live his life in harmony with God's will (Jas 4:13-17)

We can show respect for the sacredness of life by exercising our spirituality, taking in knowledge of God, obeying his commands, and walking in God's ways (Mic 4:1-5)

This calls for self-sacrifice, 'living no longer for ourselves' (2Co 5:15)

Should put away 'the desire of the flesh, desire of the eyes, and showy display of one's means of life' (1Jo 2:16)

SHARE JEHOVAH'S VIEW OF THE SANCTITY OF LIFE AND BLOOD (13 min.)

Because we view life as sacred, we have God's view of mankind and strive to show love for our fellowman

Involves our sharing Jehovah's concern for mankind in general, not wanting any to be destroyed (2Pe 3:9)

Greatest good that we can do for others is, not helping them medically or socially, but helping them to get in line for everlasting life

We must warn the wicked of their need to turn from their wicked way and accept God's way, which leads to life (Eze 3:18, 19)

We are obliged to avoid anything that could cause bloodguilt, including loss of life to us or to others

Like the psalmist, we fittingly pray that Jehovah deliver us from bloodguiltiness and bloodguilty ones (Ps 51:14)

We should strive to keep separate from every form of false religion (Re 18:4)

Since blood is sacred in God's eyes, it is wrong to drink or eat blood or to eat the meat of an animal that has not been properly bled (Ac 15:28, 29)

When an animal is strangled, speared, shot, or caught in a trap and is not bled quickly, a Christian cannot eat its meat without incurring bloodguilt

True Christians will not accept a blood transfusion (Ac 21:25)

Though nonblood medical management is increasingly being recognized as a valid alternative, a Christian may still come under pressure to accept a blood transfusion, with all the health risks this can involve

Want to live, but will not try to save present life temporarily by breaking God's laws (Mt 16:25)

As those who hold life and blood sacred, Christians are conscious of avoiding needless risk-taking

Make sure cars and homes are safe, and obey traffic and other safety laws

Avoid risking lives just for pleasure and excitement, not sharing in violent sports that deliberately hurt people (De 22:8)

SHOW THAT WE HOLD LIFE AND BLOOD SACRED BY OUR LIFE COURSE (4 min.)

Mold life in harmony with Jehovah's will, and give his law and worship first place (De 30:19, 20)

Involves our making conscious choices, deliberately putting true worship first, not assuming that we can just coast along

Like Christ Jesus, we live our lives in harmony with Jehovah's will, knowing we are accountable to him (1Pe 4:1, 2)

Have concern for fellow servants of God, and help others to gain life (Php 2:17, 18)

Paul did the right and good thing in being poured out in behalf of others; it was a basis for satisfaction in life

We too can derive true happiness and satisfaction from using our lives in Jehovah's service (Ps 16:11)

(Adhere closely to the outlined material, and observe the indicated timing of each section. Not all cited texts need be read or commented on)