

The Hebrew Corner

Blood is a constant theme throughout the Bible, as we are told in Leviticus 17:11 that “the life of the flesh is in the blood.”

The word for blood in Hebrew is dam (דם, DAHM). We are introduced to this word first in the book of Genesis, after Cain kills Abel, and God confronts him (Genesis 4:9-11):

“And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother. And he said, I know not: am I my brother’s keeper. And he said, What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground.”

The Hebrew word for brother is ach (אח, AHCH; *pronounce CH from the back of the throat, as in the German composer Bach*), so the phrase damay achicha (דמי אחיך) means blood of your brother, or your brother’s blood. The significance of the shedding of blood was made known by God to Noah after the flood, as seen in Genesis 9:6:

“Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed.”

In the Hebrew Tanach this verse is represented by a six-word phrase shofayk dam ha’adam ba’adam damo yishfak (שפך דם האדם באדם דמו ישפך, shoh-FAYK DAHM hah-ah-DAHM bah-ah-DAHM dahm-MOH yihsh-FAHK). We see the

Hebrew root word for blood, dam, appearing twice in this phrase. There is another Hebrew word that you should recognize, also appearing twice. This is the word adam (אדם, ah-DAHM), which can be the proper name of the man Adam, used in Genesis 2, but also can be translated as man or mankind. The Hebrew root word shafak (שפך, shah-FAHK), means to pour out, or (in the case of blood) to shed. We can see here that Hebrew is a very compact language, as only six words in Hebrew are needed to say what requires 11 words in English. This is because Hebrew frequently attaches prefixes and suffixes to a word instead of using personal pronouns (he, she, ...), conjunctions (and, but, ...), or articles (a, an, the).

We see from the previous verse that God commands a high penalty from the shedding of human blood. In Exodus 12, the first indication of the importance of blood in salvation is presented. God instructs Moses that on the fourteenth day of that month, which was to be the first month of each year from that time on, each family was to kill an unblemished lamb less than 1 year old. They were then to take the blood (Hebrew dam) and strike the upper door post and the side posts with it. Doing this saved the firstborn of each family from being killed by the destroying angel executing God's judgment in the tenth plague upon Egypt. This is a clear foreshadowing of Jesus' death on the cross, and his shedding of blood, to take the judgment for the sins of mankind. The upper post of the door represents the vertical post of the cross where his feet were nailed, and the side posts of the door represents the horizontal bar upon which his hands were nailed and his arms suspended.

Keep in mind that Jesus (Yeshua in Hebrew) referred to himself as follows (John 10:9):

“I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture.”

May we all give our lives and trust in the lamb of God, Jesus, our Yeshua, who shed his blood to save all who will come to him. Have a blessed new year in the Lord!