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May 20, 2011
<http://fbcweb.org/doctrines.html>

JEWISH APOLOGETICS (54)
ANSWERING JEWISH OBJECTION #45
(DDR #673)

Objection #45: Even if I accept your premise that blood sacrifices are of great importance in the Torah, the fact is that our Hebrew Bible—including the Torah itself—offers other means of atonement, not just the shedding of blood.

Brown's short response to this objection:

There can be no question that blood atonement is the central and most important form of atonement in the Bible. The blood is essential, foundational, and irreplaceable. Because blood sacrifices form the heart and soul of the biblical system of atonement, both the New Testament and numerous authoritative Rabbinic traditions state that without shedding of blood, there is no atonement. Take away the blood, and the entire biblical system of atonement collapses.¹

What is going on here is modern Judaism's attempt to discount the need for blood [living] sacrifice so as to marginalize the need for the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. Of course, we understand that the *literal* blood is not the issue. Blood is what is known as a representative analogy for life and in particular life given as a sacrificial substitute. Hebrews 9:22 tells us that "without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness." The life of the animal is in the blood:

Leviticus 17:11 'For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement.'

The person offering the sacrifice would put his hands on the animal to identify his sinful self with the animal, and the priest would cut the throat of the animal. As the blood drained out of the

¹Michael L. Brown, *Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus: General and Historical Objections—Volume 2*, (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2000), 103-23. In his book, Brown lists the objection and then gives a short response that is followed by a more developed response. This DDR series, for the most part, tracks the objection and his *short* response, after which you will find my comments. I highly recommend his book if you are interested in his longer responses (there is far too much material to include in the DDRs).

animal, there was the depiction a life being substituted for the sins of the person. The issue was not the literal blood but the life that was given as a substitute. The innocent animal bore the penalty of death for the sinful person. This analogy was fulfilled as Christ offered Himself up as a sacrifice for our sins. His literal blood was not the issue. The issue was life for life.

In an attempt to get away from the need for blood sacrifice [life for life], Judaism points to OT references to sacrifices of flour (Lev. 5:12), money (Exod. 30:15), incense (Num. 16:46-48). The problem is that these *proof-texts* do not teach bloodless atonement. The flour was mixed with blood on the altar, money was related to ransom, and the incense was related to stopping a plague. Brown aptly concludes:

God established life for life—not money for life, not jewelry for life, not flour for life, not incense for life—as the means of expiation for his people. As the Talmudic rabbis recognized—as least while the Temple stood—“There is no atonement without blood.”

Safe and Sound in Him,

Pastor Don