

DON'T MESS WITH THE BLOOD!¹

I. INTRODUCTION

According to Christian theology, the “Fall of Man”, i.e., the sin of Adam and Eve, who ate from the forbidden fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, has infected all humanity with a stain that ended “eternal life”. Christians point to the ordinary animal sacrifices described in the Mosaic Law and claim that atonement for sins can be obtained only through the *shedding of blood*. However, this system was valid only for Jews, and it was effective only while there was a central location where the sacrificial animals could be offered. Namely, it was first the “portable” Sanctuary in the wilderness and, later, it was the Temple in Jerusalem.

The advent of Jesus changed all of this. The purpose for the arrival of Jesus, which is that God, out of his love for humanity, provided the “perfect sacrifice” in the form of “His only begotten son” Jesus (see John 3:16), forms the foundation on which Christianity rests. The death of Jesus on the cross was the last and final sacrifice, and his blood had the power of the ransom required to overcome the sinful nature of mankind, wipe clean the stain of “Original Sin”, and restore “eternal life”.

Christian missionaries to the Jews claim that, since the *shedding of blood* is required for the remission of sins, Jews have had no way to obtain atonement from the time the Romans destroyed the Second Temple in 70 C.E. Therefore, the only option left for a Jew is to accept Jesus as lord and savior, because he died for our sins.

The Biblical reference cited by missionaries in support of the claim is the following:

Leviticus 17:11(KJV) - "... for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul."

The apparent message contained in this portion of the verse is echoed on several occasions in the New Testament. A superficial reading of only this portion of the verse in Leviticus, without studying the entire passage and placing this verse in its

¹ Transliterations of Hebrew terminology into the Latin alphabet will follow these guidelines:

- Transliterated terminology is shown in ***bold italicized*** font
- The accented syllable in transliterated terminology is shown in **SMALL CAPS** font
- Latin vowel-sounds, A – E – I – O – U, are used (not the English versions thereof!)
- Distinct Hebrew letter that have ambiguous Latin letter sounds are transliterated according to the following rules:
 - A vocalized letter א is transliterated as the equivalent Latin vowel
 - A vocalized letter ב is transliterated as the equivalent Latin vowel with an added underscore
 - The letter ח is transliterated as “h”
 - The letter ט is transliterated as “ch”
 - The letter ק is transliterated as “k”
 - The letter פ is transliterated as “q”
 - A vocalized **SHVA** (וְ אֵיִשׁוּ) is transliterated as a superscripted “e” following the consonant
 - There is no “doubling” of letters in the transliterations to reflect the **daGESH** (emphasis)

proper context, will almost certainly lead one to conclude that only in being covered by the shed blood of Jesus can forgiveness be obtained for one's sins.

This essay aims to correct this perception by explaining the sacrificial system that is mandated in the Hebrew Bible, and to show that associating with it the death of Jesus on the cross is false and inconsistent with what the Hebrew Bible teaches.

II. THE FACTS ACCORDING TO THE HEBREW BIBLE

A. What else does Leviticus 17:11 say?

Table II.A-1 shows side-by-side renditions of the complete verse Leviticus 17:11. The portion used by Christian missionaries is highlighted in the respective renditions. The King James Version (KJV) translation includes a reference to a passage in the New Testament that points back to Leviticus 17:11. [This reference is from the New American Standard Bible (NASB). However, the corresponding passage quoted below the table is from the KJV for consistency.]

Table II.A-1 – The passage Leviticus 17:11

King James Version Translation	Jewish Translation from the Hebrew	Hebrew Text
Leviticus 17:11		וַיִּקְרָא יְיָ
For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul ⁽¹⁾ .	For the soul of the flesh is in the blood, and I have therefore given it [the blood] to you [to be placed] upon the altar, to atone for your souls; for it is the blood that atones for the soul.	כִּי-נִפְשׁ הַבֶּשֶׂר בַּדָּם הוּא וְאֲנִי נֹתְתִיו לָכֶם עַל-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ לְכַפֵּר עַל-נַפְשׁוֹתֵיכֶם כִּי-הַדָּם הוּא בִּנְפֹשׁ יִכַּפֵּר:

(1) Hebrews 9:22(KJV) - And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

Although there is some disparity between the two translations of the verse, in general, they are reasonably consistent. Based on the proper reading of the Hebrew text, bracketed phrases have been added to the Jewish translation in order to clarify the context.

This verse is part of a passage that deals with the prohibition on the consumption of blood. When this verse is considered in its entirety, it becomes evident that a specific statement concerning blood is conveyed. Namely, that the blood of the sacrificed animal must be placed "**upon the altar to atone for your souls**", i.e., that the only way blood may bring atonement is if placed on the altar in the Temple – this is a requirement for both sin and guilt offerings.

A pertinent question here is: "*Was the blood of Jesus sprinkled on the altar as specified in Leviticus 17:11?*" The New Testament is silent on this requirement, and offers no evidence that the blood of Jesus was placed on the altar in the Temple, which was still standing in Jerusalem at the alleged time of his death.

This fact alone, that the biblical requirement was not satisfied, voids the claim that the death of Jesus provided atonement for any sins, not to mention the strict prohibition on human sacrifice in the Hebrew Bible, the Scripture in force.

B. Is blood the only means for the atonement of sins?

Many different methods for the atonement of various sins are identified in the Hebrew Bible. Among these, animal sacrifices, contrite repentance & prayer, and charitable deeds, are the three major paths to the remission of most sins.

1. Animal sacrifices

The Torah speaks of two kinds of animal sacrifices that were to be used for the atonement of iniquities: חטאת (*hata't*), a **sin sacrifice**, and אשם (*asham*), a **guilt sacrifice**.

According to the Hebrew Bible, a sin sacrifice does not provide atonement for every kind of sin. Rather, its purpose is to atone only for unintentional sins committed by a person – the most insignificant type of transgression:

Numbers 15:27-28 - (27) And if a person sins inadvertently, then he shall offer a female goat in its first year as a sin offering [חטאת]. (28) And the priest shall atone for the erring person who sinned inadvertently before the Lord in order to make atonement on his behalf; and it shall be forgiven him.

The requirements concerning a sin sacrifice are specified in Leviticus 4:1-35, where these offerings are declared as mandatory, and that their purpose is to atone for sins committed unwittingly.

On the other hand, a sin sacrifice cannot atone for sins that were committed with intent. The willful sinner was barred from the Sanctuary, and had to bear his own iniquity because of his rebellious intent to sin against God:

Numbers 15:30-31 - (30) And the person who does anything presumptuously, whether he is a native born or a stranger, that person blasphemes the Lord; and that person shall be cut off from among his people. (31) Because he has scorned the word of the Lord, and has violated his commandment, that person shall surely be cut off, for his iniquity is upon him.

There are, however, several specific transgressions that were committed with intent for which the Levitical Law of Sacrifice mandates a guilt sacrifice. The requirements concerning a guilt sacrifice for one of these transgressions are specified in Leviticus 5:14-26, where these offerings are declared as obligatory for robbery and misappropriation of Temple property, for which restitution had to be made as well.

An interesting case concerns the requirements for the atonement of sins such as being a false witness and then confessing to it, and entering the Sanctuary

inadvertently while being ritually unclean, and then realizing what happened and confessing to it (Lev 5:1-13). The Torah does not give a name for this required offering; the Sages of the Talmud refer to it as קָרְבַּן עוֹלָה וְיִזְרֵד (*qorban o'leh v'yored*), a **variable offering**;² literally, a sliding scale offering that depended on a person's financial means, and which had the following progression:

☆ **Top level** – a female lamb or goat (i.e., a **blood** sacrifice):

Leviticus 5:6 – And he shall bring his guilt offering to the Lord for his sin which he committed, a female from the flock, either a sheep or a goat, for a sin offering; and the priest shall make atonement for him from his sin.

☆ **Intermediate level** – a pair of turtledoves or young pigeons (i.e., a **blood** sacrifice, but one that is less costly than a lamb or a goat):

Leviticus 5:7-10 – (7) And if he cannot afford a sheep, he who sinned shall bring as his guilt offering two turtle doves or two young pigeons before the Lord, one for a sin offering, and one for a burnt offering. (8) He shall bring them to the priest, who shall first offer up that [bird] which is [designated] for the sin offering; he shall cut its head at the nape, but shall not separate it. (9) And he shall sprinkle from the blood of the sin offering on the wall of the altar, and the remainder of the blood shall be pressed out onto the base of the altar; it is a sin offering. (10) And he shall offer up the second one as a burnt offering, according to the law; and the priest shall make atonement for him from his sin which he had committed, and he shall be forgiven.

☆ **Bottom level** – a certain weight of fine flour (i.e., a **bloodless** offering; the least costly):

Leviticus 5:11-13 - (11) And if he cannot afford two turtledoves or two young pigeons, then he who sinned shall bring as his offering one tenth of an ephah of fine flour for a sin offering; he shall not put oil on it, nor shall he place frankincense upon it, for it is a sin offering. (12) He shall bring it to the priest, and the priest shall scoop out a fistful as a memorial thereof, and burn it on the altar, upon the fires of the Lord; it is a sin offering. (13) The priest shall make atonement for him from his sin which he had committed in any one of these [instances], and he shall be forgiven; and [the rest of] it shall belong to the priest, like the meal offering.

Note that an animal sacrifice is not required for atonement when an individual cannot afford the specified sin offering. Only “one tenth of an ephah of fine flour”, free of oil and frankincense, serves as an acceptable (bloodless) sin offering!

Since these types of sacrifices do not include all possible sins, it follows that no animal sacrifices were mandated for all other transgressions not covered by either a sin sacrifice or a guilt sacrifice. Clearly, there had to exist some process, other than animal sacrifices, to obtain atonement for such sins.

² See, for example, the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Sh^evu'ot, Folio 3a.

2. Contrite repentance and prayer

Another way to obtain atonement for sins is through contrite repentance and prayer. The Torah provides an early glimpse at this process:

Deuteronomy 4:27-31 – (27) And the Lord will scatter you among the peoples, and you will remain few in number among the nations where the Lord will lead you. (28) And there you will serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which do not see, and do not hear, and do not eat, and do not smell. (29) And if, from there, you will seek the Lord your God, then you will find Him, if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul. (30) When you are in distress, and these words will find their way to you; in the end of days, you will return to the Lord your God, and you will obey him; (31) For the Lord your God is a merciful God, He will not forsake you and will not destroy you; and He will not forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them.

As is evident from verses 29-31, there is no mention of shedding of blood in order to regain God's favor; only contrite repentance is required.

The same message is found throughout the Hebrew Bible. For example, King Solomon echoes the same idea in his inaugural prayer during the consecration of the First Temple in Jerusalem, the one he built:

1Kings 8:46-52 – (46) If they sin against You, for there is no man who does not sin, and You will be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, and their captors will carry them away captive to the land of the enemy, far or near; (47) And if they take it to heart in the land where they were held captive, and repent, and make supplication to You in the land of their captors, saying, "We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness"; (48) And they return to You with all their heart, and with all their soul, in the land of their enemies who led them away captive, and pray to You toward their land, which You gave to their fathers, [toward] the city which you have chosen, and [toward] the house which I have built for Your Name; (49) Then You shall hear their prayer and their supplication in heaven, Your dwelling place, and maintain their cause, (50) And forgive Your people what they have sinned against You, and all their transgressions that they have transgressed against You, and have mercy upon them before their captors, so that they may have mercy on them; (51) For they are Your people, and Your inheritance, whom You have brought out of Egypt, from inside the smelting furnace of iron; (52) That Your eyes may be open to the supplication of Your servant, and to the supplication of Your people Israel, to hear them whenever they call to You. [See also 2Chronicles 6:36-40]

Later that night, God responds to Solomon:

2Chronicles 7:12-15 – (12) And the Lord appeared to Solomon at night, and He said to him, "I have heard your prayer, and I have chosen this place for Myself for a House of sacrifice. (13) If I shut up the heaven and there be no rain, and if I command locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence upon My people. (14) And My people, upon whom My name is called, humble themselves and pray and seek My presence and repent of their evil ways, I shall hear from heaven and forgive their sin and heal their land. (15) Now, My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to the prayer of this place.

In his prophetic message, King Solomon forewarns that one day the Jewish people will be driven out of the Land of Israel and be banished to the lands of their enemies, near and far. If, during their exile, they would fervently desire to repent of their sins, face Jerusalem from their exile, and confess their sins, then God will hear their prayers and forgive all their transgressions. There is no mention of shedding of blood or any other kind of sacrificial offering in King Solomon's message. The salient message here is that the contrite and penitent prayer of a remorseful sinner can bring about a complete remission of sins and forgiveness from God, which is also the centerpiece of Judaism's atonement process throughout the long and bitter times of the exile.

The prophets conveyed the message to the Jewish people that the contrite prayer of the repentant sinner serves as an alternative to, or a substitute for, the sacrificial system. This situation prevailed during the 70-year exile in Babylon following the destruction of the First Temple by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C.E., and it is also the situation today, which has prevailed since the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans in 70 C.E.

The Prophet Hosea foretells that there will be times in the future of Israel when the people would not have a king, or a sacrificial system, or a Temple, or a High Priest:

Hosea 3:4-5 – (4) For the people of Israel shall remain many days without a king, and without a nobleman, and without a sacrifice, and without a pillar, and without an ephod, and without teraphim; (5) Afterwards, shall the people of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God and David their king; and they shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the end of days.

In a later chapter, Hosea gives the instructions on what will replace those animal sacrifices that atoned for unintentional sins while the Temple was standing in Jerusalem:

Hosea 14:2-3 – (2) Return, O Israel, to the Lord your God; for you have stumbled in your iniquity. (3) Take words with you and return to the Lord; say to Him: "You shall forgive all iniquity, and accept the good, and we will render [for] bullocks [the offering of our] lips."

In other words, prayer is to replace the animal offerings during the times alluded to in Hosea 3:4-5. The true prophets never instructed the Jewish people to worship a crucified messiah or man-god; nor does the Hebrew Bible ever teach that an innocent man can die and thereby provide atonement for the sins of the people. Quite the contrary is true, as is evident from passages such as Exodus 32:31-33, Numbers 35:33, Deuteronomy 24:16, 2Kings 14:6, Jeremiah 31:29[30 in Christian Bibles], Ezekiel 18:4,20, and Psalms 49:7-8. The sincere prayers of the penitent sinner replace animal sacrifices.

3. Charitable deeds

Last, but not least, are the charitable deeds, **חֲסֵד** (*ts^edaQAH*), **charity**. Since Judaism is a religion based on "works", with special emphasis on acts of charity, deeds of kindness are regarded as the most important component in the atonement process. The importance of acts of charity, and that doing good deeds is preferable to other actions, is stressed throughout the Hebrew Bible. In fact, **חֲסֵד** is mandated in the Torah:

Deuteronomy 15:7-8 – (7) If there will be among you a needy person, from one of your brothers within one of your cities, in your land the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart, and you shall not close your hand from your needy brother; (8) For you shall surely open your hand to him, and you shall surely lend him enough for his need which he is lacking.

This commandment is not limited to charitable acts exclusively toward Jews. In the Hebrew Bible, the command to love, to befriend, and to be kind toward a stranger is mentioned not less than 36 times, and frequently this command is linked with the phrase, "**... for you were strangers in the land of Egypt ...**", as the following passage demonstrates:

Leviticus 19:34 – "The stranger who dwells with you shall be to you as a native from among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt;" I am the Lord your God. [See also Deuteronomy 10:19]

This message is not restricted to the Torah:

Proverbs 16:6 – Through loving kindness and truth will iniquity be atoned; and through the fear of the Lord [you] depart from evil.

Daniel 4:24 [27 in Christian Bibles] - Only, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to you, and your sins will be with charity removed, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor; indeed, your tranquility will be prolonged.

The Hebrew Bible also teaches which process is preferable to God:

Hosea 6:6 – For loving-kindness is what I desire, and not sacrifice; and knowledge of God more than burnt offerings. [See also Jeremiah 7:21-23; Proverbs 21:3]

Micah 6:6-8 – (6) With what shall I come before the Lord, bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with yearling calves? (7) Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands streams of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? (8) Man has told you what is good; but what does the Lord demand of you? To do justice, and to love loving-kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.

Clearly, charitable deeds and justice are superior to sacrificial offerings.

4. Other biblical examples of remission of sins without blood

In additions to these three methods for the atonement of sins, the Hebrew Bible points to other ways in which certain sins can be expiated, some of which are summarized in Table II.B.4-1.

Table II.B.4-1 – Bloodless atonement for miscellaneous iniquities

Action	Atonement for ...	Sample reference
Death	desecrating the Holy Name	Isaiah 22:14
Incense	taking part in a rebellion	Numbers 17:11-12
Jewelry	shedding of blood in a war	Numbers 31:50
Punishment	various communal iniquities	Isaiah 40:2
Removing idols/idolatry	Idolatry & other unspecified sins	Isaiah 27:9

Clearly, the shedding of blood is not the only available option.

A succinct summary of the atonement process is present in the opening chapter of Book of Isaiah, where the prophet conveys what God prefers:

Isaiah 1:11-18 – (11) "Of what use to Me are your many sacrifices?" says the Lord; "I am sated from the burnt offerings of rams and the fat of well-fed cattle; and in the blood of bulls, and of sheep, and of male goats I do not delight. (12) When you come to appear before Me, who has requested this of you, to trample My courts? (13) You shall no longer bring a vain meal offering; it is incense of abomination to Me; as for the calling of an assembly on a New Moon and Sabbath, I cannot [bear] iniquity along with a solemn occasion. (14) Your New Moons and your appointed Feasts My soul hates, they are a burden to Me; I am weary of bearing them. (15) And when you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you, and even when you pray much, I do not hear; your hands are full of blood. (16) Wash, cleanse yourselves, remove the evil of your doings from before My eyes; cease to do evil; (17) Learn to do good, seek justice, help the oppressed; do justice to the orphan, plead [the case] for the widow. (18) Come now, and let us reason together," said the Lord; "If your sins be as scarlet, they shall become as white as snow; if they be red as crimson, they shall become as wool."

Recognizing that a person has the ability to commit iniquity by exercising his or her God-given free will, Judaism specifies a path to righteousness and salvation that is based on contrite repentance, prayer, and good deeds. The "formula" for the atonement process resides within the Hebrew Bible, and it does not include the shedding of blood as a required component.

C. Is this just theory or hypothesis? What is the evidence?

The Hebrew Bible contains many examples that illustrate the atonement process. One example of note is the story in the Book of Jonah. This account describes the Nin^evites, who were wicked people:

Jonah 1:1-2 – (1) And the word of the Lord came to Jonah son of Amittai, saying, (2) "Arise, go to Nin^eveh, the great city, and call out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me."

The Prophet Jonah was chosen to deliver a message of doom and, after some coaxing, he went on his mission to warn the people of Nin^eveh about their impending demise:

Jonah 3:4 - And Jonah began to enter into the city, one day's walk, and he called out and said, "Another forty days, and Nin^eveh shall be overturned."

The Nin^evites heeded the message and started a process of repentance, not knowing if it would be acceptable to God:

Jonah 3:5-9 – (5) And the people of Nin^eveh believed in God, and they proclaimed a fast and donned sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them. (6) And word reached the king of Nin^eveh, and he arose from his throne, and he took off his royal robe; and covered himself with sackcloth, and sat on the ashes. (7) And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nin^eveh, from the counsel of the king and his nobles, saying: "Neither man and beast, nor the cattle and the flock shall taste anything; they shall not graze nor shall they drink water! (8) And they shall cover themselves with sackcloth, man and the beast, and they shall call mightily to God; and everyone shall repent from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. (9) Who knows if God will turn and relent, and turn away from his fierce anger, and we will not perish?"

They donned sacks, fasted, and repented for their iniquities. God recognized their contriteness and relented from destroying them as He initially planned to do:

Jonah 3:10 - And God saw their deeds, that they repented from their evil way; and God relented of the evil, which He had spoken to do to them, and He did not do it.

God accepted their repentance, forgave the Nin^evites, and saved them and their great city from destruction without a blood sacrifice!

Another example is the situation that prevailed during the 70-year Babylonian exile. The sacrificial system was suspended in times when there was no Temple standing in Jerusalem. Following the return from Babylon and the rebuilding of the Temple, animal sacrifices were once again resumed. However, during those 70 years of the exile, while the Temple lay in ruins, no sacrificial offerings were possible. Yet, many righteous people lived in that period who had their sins removed through a bloodless atonement process – folks such as Daniel, Ezekiel, Ezra, Haggai, Jeremiah, Malachi, Nehemiah, Zechariah, among others – these were all men of God. Daniel's righteousness (along with that of Noah and Job [both righteous Gentiles]) was noted by the Prophet Ezekiel:

Ezekiel 14:14,20 – (14) "And if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would save themselves with their righteousness," says the Lord God. (20) And if Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, as I live," says the Lord God, "if they will save a son or a daughter; they with their righteousness would save themselves."

Jews were unable to offer sacrifices during that 70-year period, yet they remained righteous without a blood sacrifice. Clearly, the shedding of blood was not, and is not, a required component of the "formula".

Though a devout Jew asks for forgiveness in his or her daily prayers, the general time ordained in the Torah for atonement is the Holy Day of Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement; Leviticus 16:29-34 & Numbers 29:7-11). Yom Kippur is intended to be a vehicle for contrite repentance that will bring the atonement of a person's sins.³

III. CONFLICTING POSITIONS WITHIN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The earliest of the four Gospels, the Gospel of Mark, contains a story about a paralyzed man who was brought to Jesus to be healed (Mark 2:3-12). In this narrative, Jesus tells the paralyzed man that his sins are forgiven:

Mark 2:5(KJV) - When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. [See also Luke 5:17-26; Luke 5:20 is the verse that parallels Mark 2:5]

In an account in the Gospel of Luke (Luke 7:47-50) Jesus forgives the sins of a woman who sought him out and washed his feet and put ointment on his head:

Luke 7:47-48 (KJV) – (47) Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. (48) And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.

It seems that Jesus was able to forgive sins while he was alive, which appears to contradict the common Christian claim that the "sacrificial death" of Jesus on the cross and his spilled blood served to remove the sins of mankind. In fact, the argument that the blood of Jesus was required in order to "wash away" the sins is invalidated by the last verse in the passage about the woman whose sins were forgiven and removed, by Jesus' say-so:

Luke 7:50(KJV) - And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.

The woman's sins were forgiven and "washed away" – she had been "saved"!⁴ This is in sharp contrast to the notion that the spilled blood of Jesus effected the removal of sins, which appears rather frequently in Paul's Epistles, once in the Gospel of Matthew and several times in the Gospel of John. Interestingly, the approximate dating of Paul's Epistles is late-40's to mid-60's C.E.; that of the Gospel of Mark, 60's C.E.; that of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, 80's C.E.; and that of the Gospel of John, 90's C.E.

³ It is important to note that Yom Kippur atones only for sins between man and God, but not for sins against another person unless a special part of the "process" has been completed. To atone for sins against another person, one must first seek reconciliation with the hurt party, righting the wrongs one committed against him or her, whenever possible, and only then is atonement possible. This must all be done prior to the Yom Kippur Holy Day.

⁴ The forgiving of sins was part of the job of the "faith healers" of the times, even among the Jewish "charismatics", such as Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa. This is also gleaned from the Dead Sea Scrolls, in the "Prayer of Nabonidus", where Nabonidus, a Jewish "faith healer", pardoned the sins of the Babylonian king, thereby curing him from an illness that lasted for seven years.

Some pertinent questions are: *If Jesus was able to forgive sins while alive, why did he have to die to accomplish the same thing? Is John 3:16 not a false statement?*

It appears that Paul created the idea that Jesus had to die in order to remove the sins of mankind.

IV. SUMMARY

Christian missionaries use a phrase taken out of Leviticus 17:11 to claim that without the shedding of blood, specifically, the blood that Jesus shed on the cross, remission of sins is not possible.

The analysis of this claim, which involved a systematic examination of the laws that pertain to sacrificial offerings, as presented in the Hebrew Bible, demonstrates that:

- ⊙ **It is always man who offers sacrifices to God; never the other way around**
- ⊙ **Not all transgressions can be removed via the blood of sacrificial offerings**
- ⊙ **The “sin offering” and “guilt offering” removed sins from the one who offered it**
- ⊙ **For those transgressions that could be removed via the blood of sacrificial offerings, a certain process, as prescribed in the Hebrew Bible, had to be followed**
- ⊙ **Alternative means to the blood of a sacrificial animal were available to both Jew and Gentile for the removal of sins**

In other words, the shedding of blood is not a requirement for the remission of sins and, therefore, this claim by Christian missionaries has no valid basis in the Hebrew Bible.