

The Atonement

Bloodless or Bloody?

Understanding the Concept of Atonement in the Torah

Ya'acov Natan Lawrence

Waters in the Wilderness, A Teaching Ministry of Hoshana Rabbah Messianic Discipleship Resources

IN NUMBERS 31:50 WE READ, “We have therefore brought an oblation for YHVH, what every man has gotten, of jewels of gold, chains, and bracelets, rings, earrings, and tablets, to make an atonement for our souls before YHVH.” In a similar passage in Exodus 30:15–16, we read, “The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto YHVH, to make an **atonement for your souls**. And you shall take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and shall appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of the congregation; that it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel before YHVH, to make an **atonement for your souls**” (emphasis added). The question before us is this: Do these passages in the Torah imply that YHVH grants man absolution based on something other than the shedding of blood, and by logical extension, does this call into question our redemption from sin through our faith in Yeshua the Messiah’s blood atonement?

The concept of atonement can be a confusing one. Some in rabbinic Jewish circles teach that the Torah (i.e., the first five books of the Bible) does not require the shedding of blood for atonement of one’s sin to occur. According to the above Scripture, this *could* appear to be the case. Before briefly discussing the subject of *atonement*, let us not forget the stern warnings of the Apostle Peter when he warned end-time Saints against false teachers who would lure people away from the simple truth of the Gospel:

But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingers not, and their damnation slumbers not.... But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption; and shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceiving while they feast with you; having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children, which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; but was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man’s voice forbad the madness of the prophet. These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever. For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Yeshua Messiah, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. (2 Peter 2)

In the Apostolic Scriptures (New Testament), there is no question that when the concept of *atonement* (i.e., to make ransom for or to cover over man's sins) is presented it is related to the blood of Yeshua, the Lamb of YHVH, being shed for the remission of man's sins, which is the means through which reconciliation between Elohim and man occurs. In the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament), however, the idea of atonement is somewhat broader and at times more generalized in scope. Herein lies the confusion and the misconceived disparity between the Former (Old) and Latter (New) Testaments. Are they in opposition to one another, or is the latter the logical outgrowth of the former and compliments or elucidates the former?

The Hebrew word for *atonement* is *kapar*/כָּפַר. A verb, it means *to make an atonement, make reconciliation, purge*. In its noun form, *kapar* means *a ransom, gift, to secure favor* (see *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* [or *TWOT*], #1023). *Kapar* also means *to cover over* and is the same Hebrew word meaning *to cover* or *smear with pitch* as in caulking the seams of a wooden ship so that it becomes waterproof (see *Brown-Driver-Briggs* #3722). Our English words *cap* (as well as the Hebrew *kipah*, which is a small hemispherical hat that many religious Jewish men wear) and *cover* are related etymologically to *kapar* (see *The Word—The Dictionary That Reveals the Hebrew Source of Our English*, by Isaac E. Mozeson).

What can we learn from all this? *Kapar* means to *cover* that which is bare, such as the human head. It also means to *smear (or cover) with pitch* so that your ship will not sink drowning all aboard. For example, YHVH instructed Noah to “pitch/*kopar* [*Strong's* H3722] [the ark] within and without with pitch/*koper* [*Strong's* H3724].” Furthermore, *kapar* means *to ransom* someone that would otherwise be a prisoner of one's enemy and without the ransom being paid one would probably be killed. *Kapar* also means *to reconcile* with someone who has the power of life and death over you (e.g. Elohim) and *to pacify* someone who has the power to do you harm.

Now, how do we see the word used in the Hebrew Scriptures? First, it is interesting to note that in Leviticus where the priestly service and the sacrificial system is presented and discussed, the word *kapar* is used 39 times (the exact number of stripes laid across the back of Yeshua prior to his crucifixion). Furthermore, on all but several occasions, the Torah specifically links the concept of atonement to the shedding of blood relating to the expiatory sacrificial system.¹ However, in several instances where the Torah *does not* link the term *kapar*/atonement directly to the sacrificial system and the shedding of blood we shall discuss the fact later that the money or items given as an atonement was contributed to the Tabernacle and was used for its operation, including the purchase of animals for sacrificial purposes (i.e., Exod. 30:15,16 and Num. 31:50). We cannot stress strongly enough that on only several occasions out of dozens of references in the Torah to atonement does this term *not* relate directly to the shedding of blood through sacrifice!

The subject of *atonement* is much more complex than can be dealt with in this brief study, but suffice it to say, with regard to humans, Scripture teaches us that *atonement* involves something which is lacking (or leaking, as regards Noah's ark) and in danger of death or judgment (or sinking, again, in regard to Noah's ark), then having that lack (caused by sin) covered by something that will keep it from sinking spiritually even as pitch kept ancient ships from sinking. Only grace and mercy granted by a superior power who has the power of life and death over humans, namely YHVH, and his liberally *smearing* or *covering* the soul of a man with his grace and mercy can keep man from sinking spiritually in relationship to his Creator.

But when sin occurs, a price must be paid. The sinner must give something of value to the one sinned against as a penalty for breaking the laws or dictates of the superior authority or lawgiver. This is how justice is maintained in the universe. The same system holds true in secular societies. Governments establish laws by which its citizens are governed. When those laws are violated, the governing body exacts a penalty against the offender (e.g., community service, a fine, a prison sentence, or even death). Biblically, where atonement was involved, humans had to pay or give something. In the Torah, there are examples of men buying themselves temporary covering for sins committed by sacrificing animals, giving offerings and oblations, making interceding prayers, paying a half-shekel in support of the Temple sacrificial system, negating themselves by repentance and humbly looking upon a brazen snake on a pole, or by burning incense, which is symbolic of the prayers of YHVH's people (Rev. 8:4). But in the long term, an intercessory prayer, the paying of a half shekel, the waving of incense, the giving of war booty, etc. was not sufficient to ransom a man's soul from the grip of eternal death. Even the innocent animals sacrificed under the Levitical system were in themselves powerless to do this. Since the soul that sins shall die (Ezek. 18:4) and all humans have sinned, or violated the Torah-law of YHVH and all were conceived in sin (Ps. 14:1-3; 51:5; Jer. 17:9;

¹ See, Exod. 29:33,36,37; 30:10; Lev. 1:14; 4:20,26,31,35; 6:10,13,16,18; 6:7; 7:7; 8:34; 9:7; 10:17; 12:7,8; 14:18,19,21,29,31,53; 15:15,30; 16:6,10,11,16,17,18,24,27,30,32,33,34; 17:11; 19:22; 23:27,28; Num. 5:8; 6:11; 8:12,19,21; 15:25,28; 16:46,47; 28:22,30; 29:5,11.

Isa. 53:6; Rom. 3:23; 1 John 3:4), then all humans must pay with their lives in order to pay the debt they owe for their sin. Something innocent of sin must die in man's place. We see this pattern laid out at the very beginning where Scripture records that the first sinners, Adam and Eve, were covered in the skins of sacrificed animals. Genesis 3:21 records this event: "Unto Adam also and to his wife did YHVH Elohim make coats of skins, and clothed them."

Prophetically, the idea of a lamb being slain in place of a human being was acted out on Mount Moriah at the binding or *akeida* of Isaac. There Abraham declared that YHVH would provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering (a theme echoed by the prophet Isaiah in chapter 53 of his book) and indeed the heavenly Messenger of YHVH (the pre-incarnate Yeshua, the ultimate sacrificial Lamb of YHVH himself [See my lengthy and highly researched teaching article entitled *The Hebrew Scriptures & The Writings of the Jewish Rabbis Confirm The Deity and The Incarnation of Yeshua the Messiah*, on our web site at www.hoshanarabbah.org]) forbade Abraham from sacrificing Isaac. YHVH instead provided Abraham and Isaac a ram complete with a thorny thicket crown on its head (Gen. 22:8,11-13) to be a substitute sacrifice.

The death of some innocent animal and the shedding of its blood was the very basis of the sacrificial and atonement system in the Torah. And this all pointed to Yeshua the Redeemer who would die once and for all for all men (Heb. 10:10). Job knew that he needed a Redeemer (Job 19:25). David also knew that animal sacrifices could not redeem man in the ultimate sense nor could a man redeem another man. He knew that the price of man's redemption was costly (Ps. 49:7-8) and this led him to the conclusion that only Elohim could redeem man from the power of the grave through bodily resurrection (Ps. 49:15). Isaiah spoke of one who would take man's sins upon himself making his soul an offering for sin (Isa. 53:10). Jacob historically and prophetically spoke of his Redeemer who redeemed him from "all evil" (Gen. 48:16) and related it to the Messenger of YHVH (Gen. 31:11-13). Jacob also related this redeemer figure to the cross or the paleo-Hebrew letter *tav* ✎ of the Hebrew *aleph-bet* (which pictographically means *sign of the covenant* or *to seal*) (see *Hebrew Word Pictures*, by Frank T. Seekins), the sign that he made when he crossed his hands over his grandsons' heads and blessed them (Gen. 48:14).

So why do some scriptures seem to speak of a bloodless atonement? The atonement for the soul mentioned in Numbers 31:50 was but a temporary spiritual bandaid in a specific time and situation for certain individuals. The mention of atonement in these verses is a subset of the greater concept of atonement as presented in the Hebrew Scriptures. But beyond that, the portion of the war booty the Israelites paid to make atonement for their lives went directly to the priests who used it to fund the Tabernacle sacrificial system (Num. 31:54). Therefore, through the war booty, Israel was helping to purchase animals for sacrifice. So, their donation of war booty was directly tied to sacrificial system, which involved the shedding of blood for expiatory purposes.

Another Torah passage that seems to suggest the possibility of a bloodless atonement is Exodus 30:11-16 where the Israelites were instructed to pay a half-shekel, which during the Second Temple became an annual Temple tax (Neh. 10:32; Matt. 17:24). This money went, in part, toward, the service (verse 16) and constructing of the Tabernacle of Moses (e.g., *Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the OT*, Vol. 1, p. 459; Exod. 38:21-31) and later toward the purchase of the animals the priests sacrificed (*The Temple and Its Service*, by Alfred Edersheim, p. 48). In this way, the people were participating vicariously in the act of sacrificing an innocent animal as an offering or atonement for their sins. Again, the Scriptures reveal that this sacrificial system merely pointed the way to the Greater Sacrifice that would come later in the Person of Yeshua, the Redeemer of Israel (Read Isa. 53.). On the point that paying the half-shekel was a merely a temporary solution to the problem of man's sin, Keil and Delitzsch say in their commentary on this passage,

As an expiation [atonement] for souls, it pointed to the unholiness of Israel's nature, and reminded the people continually, that by nature it was alienated from God, and could only remain in covenant with the Lord and live in His kingdom on the ground of His grace, which covered its sin (*Ibid.*).

Keil and Delitzsch's point is further strengthened in Exodus 30:16, which says,

And you shall take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and shall appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of the congregation; that it may be a **memorial** unto the children of Israel before YHVH, to make an atonement for your souls. (emphasis added)

The giving of the half-shekel was a *memorial* to what? The Hebrew word for *memorial* is *zikrown* (*Strong's* H2146) meaning *reminder, token, record*. According to the *TWOT*, a *zikrown* is an object or act which brings something else

to mind or which represents something else. As used in Scripture, it may be a reminder of a historical fact or event, or it may remind a person of their Creator.

How was the giving of the half-shekel a memorial for the Children of Israel? First, it reminded them of their sinfulness, of the fact that their sin would cost them something, and that the silver they paid for their sin would be used to purchase an innocent lamb, bull or goat to be sacrificed on their behalf. They furthermore could not escape the fact that sin was ever with them and that no matter how they tried not to sin, they still sinned, and they had to pay a price or penalty for that sin, and there was no escaping this vicious cycle. Something had to be done for man to break him out of this place of no escape. Only YHVH, the Lawgiver and Judge had the power and authority to find a permanent solution. Man did not have the power to redeem himself, or to grant himself clemency from his sin, or to change his heart so that he would not sin. Therefore, among those who were earnestly endeavoring to walk in righteousness, to live without sinning, the paying of the half-shekel doubtless was a constant reminder or memorial of their helplessness, and of their need of help from above. In retrospect, we now know that that help came in the person of the Messiah, Redeemer of Israel. Prior to this, Isaiah prophesied that the “Arm of YHVH” (Isa. 53:1) would be extended toward sinful man in the personage of a messianic figure who would come to earth and redeem man from sin through his own sacrificial death (e.g., Isa. 53, entire chapter).

Long before the prophets of Israel penned their scrolls, Job, one of the most ancient figures in Scripture and whose name is on what is thought by many to be the oldest book in the Bible, knew that sacrificing animals could not permanently atone for man’s sin. Though he made sacrifices for him and his children (Job 1:5), he came to the place of crying out to YHVH for a permanent solution to the high cost of sin, when he declared in Job 19:24–27,

For I know that my Redeemer lives, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see Eloah, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another; though my heart be consumed within me.

Yeshua the Messiah and Redeemer of Israel is the only one who has fulfilled this prophecy in the entire history of the people of Israel. The half-shekel the Israelites paid along with the daily sacrifices reminded them of their perpetual sinfulness, and of their need for a permanent Redeemer who would once and for all atone for their sins and free them from the penalty, guilt and grip of sin. That person was Yeshua.

Let’s continue exploring some other aspects of the half-shekel as it relates to the subject of atonement.

Beyond Israel’s contribution toward the construction and upkeep of the sacrificial system that the paying of the half-shekel afforded, we need to ask, as does Arthur W. Pink in his commentary on Exodus 30:11–15, why does the Torah place the command about the half-shekel between the instructions for building the Golden Altar (Exod. 30:1–10) of Incense and the Bronze Laver (Exod. 30:17–21)? Furthermore, he asks what was the significance of the amount of silver given, why was this tax levied on those twenty years of age and older, what is the link between the census of Israel and Israel’s paying of the Temple tax, why was it paid annually and what do all these things have to do with atonement or ransom for their souls? Additionally, doesn’t Scripture tell us that the Israelites had already been redeemed at the Red Sea (Exod. 15:13)? If so, why did they need to be redeemed again (*Gleanings in Exodus*, p. 289ff)? Understanding the answers to these question will perhaps help us to understand the deeper purpose of the half-shekel, its prophetic implication and how paying it made atonement for their souls.

To answer these questions, we need to first understand that, in Hebraic thought, redemption is not a one-time event that happens at the beginning of one’s spiritual journey as one comes into relationship with the Elohim of Israel. Redemption or salvation in the typical Christian paradigm is viewed as a one-time event that happens when one “gets saved” or is “born again.” This is not the Hebraic or biblical model. Redemption or salvation is more than *an event*, it is *a process*. It is true that one is *initially* saved at the beginning of one’s conversion *from* the kingdom of spiritual darkness *to* the kingdom of Elohim’s light, but Scripture teaches us that redemption is *also* a life-long and ongoing process, and that there is even a *future* redemption. Redemption in the future will culminate in what is known in Hebraic thought as “The Final Redemption” when captive and scattered Israel will be liberated and returned to the land of its promised inheritance, when the resurrection of the righteous dead will occur, when Messiah will defeat all of Israel’s enemies and will rule the earth from Jerusalem. The Apostolic Scriptures reveal that after this occurs, the resurrected and glorified Saints will rule as kings and priests under the kingship of Messiah Yeshua.

The next thing that we need to understand is this: The Tabernacle of Moses was a prophetic picture of this past-present-future redemptive process. What Israel did with respect to the Tabernacle is the spiritual model or pattern that all Believers in the Elohim of Israel must follow to have a spiritual relationship with Elohim.

Now with these things in mind, let's answer the questions we asked earlier about the relevance of the half-shekel and how Israel's paying it served to atone for their souls.

Israel's sins were atoned for at their first Passover in Egypt, which was the first step in the process of redemption. This initial process culminated in Israel's baptism in the waters of the Red Sea (Exod. 15:13). This is a prophetic picture of the Believer being baptized for the remission of sins (Mark 16:15–16 and Acts 2:37–41 cp 1 Cor. 10:2). This initial process is modelled in the Tabernacle of Moses. The Altar of the Red Heifer, which stood just outside the Tabernacle, modelled the Passover lamb whose blood was smeared on the Israelites' doors. It was a picture of atonement being made at the *beginning* of one's spiritual walk with the Elohim of Israel. Nothing sinful or unclean (unatoned for or unredeemed) could enter the Tabernacle. In the future, Yeshua, the Redeemer of Israel—of which the red heifer was a prophetic type, would be crucified outside the walls of Jerusalem (Heb. 9:11–14 and 13:8–13) fulfilling the prophetic shadow-picture of the red heifer. Once a priest or individual was spiritually or ritually purified by the ashes of the red heifer, the priest (or individual, hypothetically) was allowed to enter the Tabernacle to minister to and enter into spiritual relationship with the Elohim of Israel. Once inside, the priest (or individual, hypothetically or in a spiritual sense) would first come to the Altar of Sacrifice—a picture of the Passover meal. This altar reminds us of the fact that even after *initial* redemption (at the Altar of the Red Heifer), we are still mortal sin-prone beings. We will sin again and will still need the atoning grace and mercy of the Elohim of Israel as we progress along our spiritual journey. It was on this altar that the continual twice daily offerings were made. The purpose of these sacrifices was to atone for Israel's sins that she would commit *after* her initial atonement and redemption at the Passover in Egypt and at Red Sea.

Next, one would come to the Bronze Laver, which is a picture of spiritual cleansing. It was here that the priests washed their hands and feet daily before ministering to YHVH. This not only speaks of initial immersion for the remission of sins, but ongoing cleansing of our actions (hands) and directions (feet) by the water of YHVH's Word (Eph. 5:26 cp. Heb. 10:22) and by his Spirit (Tit. 3:5), which the Gospel and Book of Acts accounts show often came upon man at the time of water baptism.

Now, why is the passage in Exodus 30 about the half-shekel positioned between the Scriptures that command the construction of the Bronze Laver and the Altar of Incense, which sat in front of the veil to the Holy of Holies—the inner most part of the Tabernacle's sanctuary? It was at the Altar of Incense that the deepest worship of Elohim occurred. This is a picture of the Saints' prayers going up to heaven as sweet smelling incense before the throne of Elohim (Rev. 8:4). In the Tabernacle of Moses, the Altar of Incense was positioned just in front of what is commonly called the Mercy Seat or *Kapporet*. The term *Mercy Seat* as found in many of our English Bibles derives from the Hebrew word *kapar* (*Strong's G3722*), which according to the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (*TWOT* 1023) means *to make an atonement, make reconciliation, purge*. The Mercy Seat or the golden "lid" covering the Ark of the Covenant located in the Holy of Holies or *D'veer* (i.e., the inner shrine of the Tabernacle of Moses), is the Hebrew word *kapporet* (*Strong's G3727, TWOT* 1023c) meaning *the place of atonement or the place where atonement was made*. The *TWOT* defines what happened at the *kapporet* as follows:

It was from the ... Mercy Seat that [YHVH] promised to meet with the men [of Israel] (Num. 7:89). The word, however, is not related to mercy and of course was not a seat. The word is derived from the root "to atone." The Greek equivalent in the LXX is usually *hilasterion*, "place or object of propitiation," a word which is applied to [Messiah] in Rom. 3:25. The translation "mercy seat" does not sufficiently express the fact that the lid of the ark was the place where the blood was sprinkled on the day of atonement. "Place of atonement" would perhaps be more expressive.

What is the message here? Why does YHVH's Torah position the command for Israel to pay the silver half-shekel *between* the instructions to build the Bronze Laver and the Altar of Incense? Simply this, YHVH was trying to teach his people that man *cannot* enter into an intimate spiritual relationship with his Creator, his Heavenly Father *until* he has had his sins atoned for, been spiritually cleansed by the "washing" of the Word of Elohim and by the work of the Spirit of Elohim in one's heart and mind. Only then, can one enter into the holy (set-apart) Tabernacle or sanctuary, stand before his Creator and offer up to him prayer and praise.

The half shekel was made of silver, which represents redemption or Elohim's ransom price for man's sin. In fact, the entire Tabernacle rested on a silver foundation. The vertical boards of the Tabernacle itself were set in posts of silver (Exod. 26:15–30) made from the half-shekels that came from the people (Exod. 38:25–27). This teaches us that the redemption of humanity is at the very foundation of the whole Tabernacle system.

All, both rich and poor, were to give a half-shekel. This teaches us that all men are equal before Elohim, that he is not a respecter of persons, that all equally need redemption from sin, and that no man's sin is greater or less than that of another. A shekel, which was a unit of measure, was comprised of twenty *gerabs* (Exod. 30:13). The half-shekel was ten *gerabs*. Pink points out that ten is the biblical number of human responsibility and points to the ten commandments, which represent man's legal responsibility before YHVH. In sinning, man has violated these ten commandments and brought upon himself the resulting death penalty. Paying the ten *gerabs* of silver was an object lesson to teach the Israelites the important principle that there is a price to pay when we break Elohim's laws (*Gleanings in Exodus*, p. 291). Those ten *gerabs* went, in part, toward purchasing the animals used in the on-going sacrifices on the Altar of Sacrifice in the Tabernacle.

The paying of the half-shekel annually shows that even after Israel had been redeemed initially at the beginning of their spiritual walk, they still sinned, a price still had to be paid for that sin, and an atonement of blood had to still be paid for each and every sin. That was under the Levitical sacrificial system. Since Yeshua came and died on the cross paying for our sins once and for all, we now have only to confess our sins, repent of them and YHVH will cleanse us of unrighteousness and forgive us of our sins on the merit of Yeshua's having paid the price for our sins by his blood atonement (1 John 1:9; Heb. 10:1-22).

We will now answer the question why the command to give the half-shekel was tied to the numbering of Israel. Scripture teaches us that the numbering of something indicates ownership (Pink, p. 290). A person counting his money, or a shepherd his sheep is a sign of possession. YHVH's numbering of Israel was his way of saying, "These are mine. These redeemed people are my treasured possession!" (Exod. 19:5-6). Only a redeemed people can be the people of YHVH. They have been called out of the world to be his special people.

Finally, only those of age twenty and above were subject to paying the half-shekel. Why age twenty? The Torah reveals that this is the age of accountability. At this age, a man was old enough to go to war (Num. 1:3). Furthermore, YHVH held all those who were twenty and above accountable for the sins of Israel in the wilderness (Num. 14:29; 32:11). YHVH reckoned that by age twenty a person should have the maturity to know the difference between good and evil and be able to make right choices. This was also the age when an Israelite male should take full accountability for his sins and those of his household, assuming he was married. In other words, by age twenty, a person should be walking as a fully redeemed Israelite before YHVH.

Again, there are those who would lift from Scripture a single passage like Exodus 30:15-16 or Numbers 31:50 and attempt to formulate doctrines inconsistent with the rest Scripture. For example, some have attempted to use these passages to "prove" that one can atone for one's sins through other means than the shedding of blood. This, frankly, is a weak attempt to circumvent some very prominent Scriptures and biblical patterns that teach that only through the shedding of blood can atonement be made. Eventually, it is an attempt to invalidate the Messiahship of Yeshua, the Lamb of Elohim slain from the foundation of the world who came as the arm of YHVH to take away the sins of the world (Rev. 13:8; Isa. 53:1; John 1:29).

If one takes a single passage from the Torah that speaks about atonement being made for souls, and does not consider the broader meaning and spiritual context of the Hebrew word *kapar* or *atonement* and the context in which that word is used, then one may well fall into the trap of snipping a twig from the tree and calling it the trunk. This brings to our remembrance the fable of the blind men who each described an elephant by the part he happened to be holding. The one gripping the tail was certain an elephant was like a rope, the one at the leg thought it was like a tree, and the trunk a snake, and so on. Likewise, Numbers 31:50 and Exodus 30:11-16 cannot be taken as doctrinal statements defining the *whole* concept of atonement, or in some way inferring that Scripture teaches that atonement can occur *without* the shedding of blood. Scripture nowhere implies that one can do an "end run" around the shedding of blood for the atoning or remission of one's sins. If the shedding of blood is not necessary to atone for man's sins then YHVH lies when he clearly states in 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" (NAS). Do we make void a foundational truth of Torah from the lips of YHVH by our misunderstanding of a few obscure (to us) verses in the Torah? Elohim forbid! May it never be so!

Make no mistake about it, the sinner has two choices: namely, to pay or atone for his sin with his own blood (Ezek. 18:10-13, 20), or for someone else to step in, to die in his place thus redeeming, atoning, or ransoming him from the guilt and penalty of his own sin, which is eternal death. Job knew he needed a redeemer and that his own righteousness could not save him from eternal death (Job 19:24-27). Do you know this? Who is your Redeemer?

