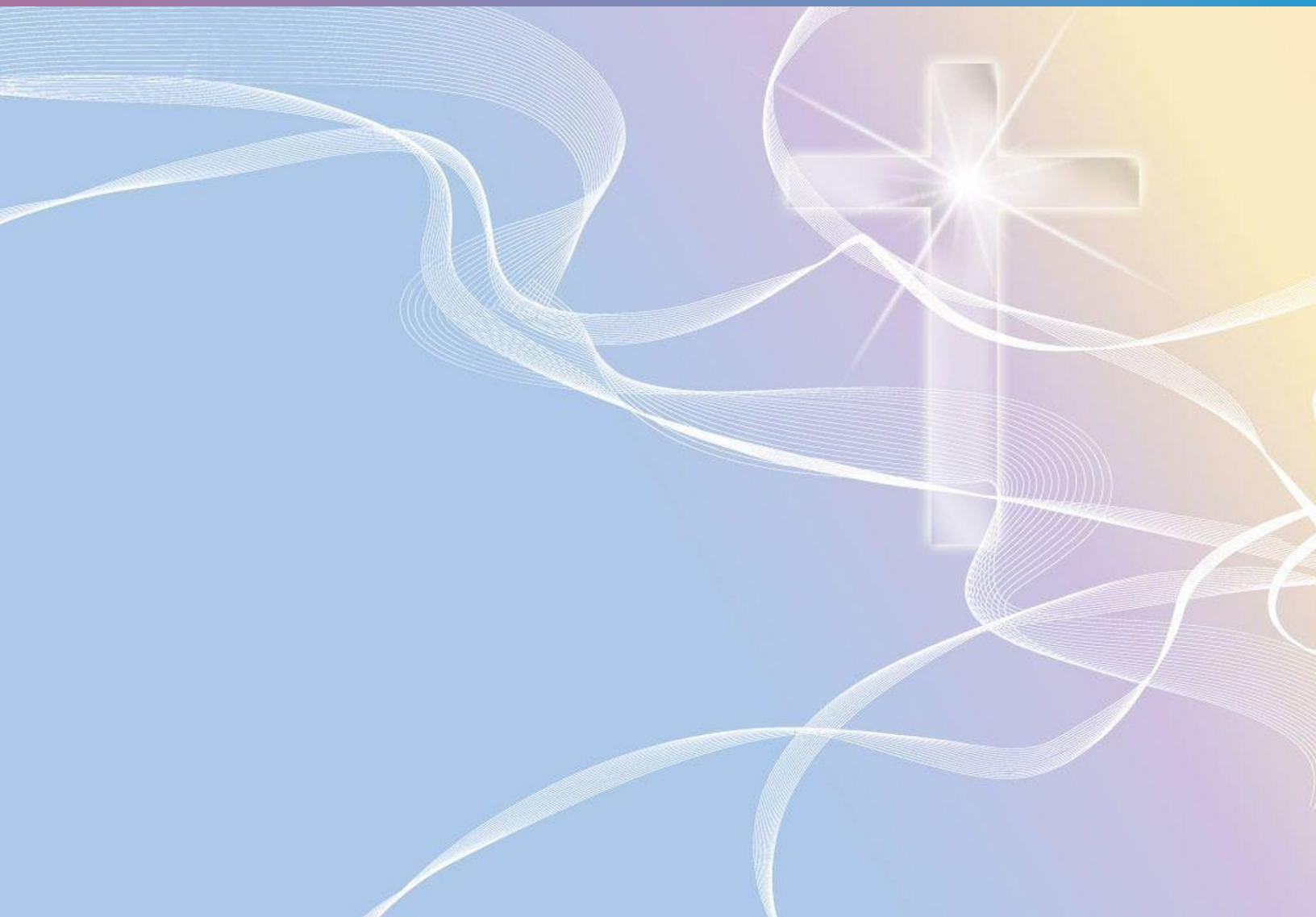


The Cross



Dr. Sharon Schuetz

The Bible calls Jesus the Last Adam. As the Last Adam, He died to sin. When He lived in His fleshly body, He was alive to the power of sin and the pain and suffering it could cause Him. Sin could hurt Him through rejection, deprivation, persecution, and many other dealings with men. When He laid down His life on the cross, He died entirely to sin's power. It had no more dominion over Him, nor could it hurt Him. Jesus redeemed humanity in this selfless act of love.

Appreciating the price Jesus paid for our salvation is important. It's the only way to know the value of His sacrifice. Hebrews tells us, "(And) almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22). To purge is to "get rid of whatever is impure or undesirable." Blood is the only thing that can remove sin. For centuries, God used the blood of animals to teach man the importance of Jesus' blood.

The Bible explains that it was necessary to shed blood from the very beginning. After declaring the curse on Adam and Eve, God had to kill an animal to provide clothing for them. Every important Old Testament event either preceded or followed animal sacrifice. This wasn't because of God's needs. It illustrates the importance of Christ's blood to man's limited human understanding. It also revealed the immense sacrifice He would make for us.

Old Testament man had only one hope beyond the grave; this was God's promise to Abraham. God gave Moses the Law while Israel wandered in the desert. It was rigid. There was little flexibility in its demands. It declared "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth."

God promised Abraham, a son who would be the source of a great nation. The nation of Israel would one day bring man's Redeemer into the world. Abraham believed God. This was the only way Old Testament saints could have hope. It was through the promise that one day, a Redeemer would come. Their hope was a future hope. They hoped that one day, their Redeemer would be born of the seed of a woman.

The law was limited in what it could do for us. It could only point out our flaws. It told us how corrupt and evil we were. We had no power to change. It was like receiving an invitation to an elegant dinner and standing in front of a mirror to get ready. In the glass, you can see a large smudge of dirt on your face and uncombed hair. You try to wipe the dirt off your face and realize you can't move your arms. Time passes quickly, but you can't wash your face or comb your hair. This is your only chance. You know you can never enter unless you are spotless. What can you do?

According to the law, there was very little you could do except wait for a promised comb, washcloth, and the freedom to move so you could use them. There is nothing you can do. You are completely dependent on someone else. Jesus brought the washcloth the comb, and released us to have the freedom to clean up. It all came by His blood. His blood washes and cleanses our hearts, giving us the power over ourselves and Satan to get cleaned-up and to stay cleaned-up. Through His death on the cross and His resurrection, we can walk in the freedom God intended for his daughters.