

There is Power in the Blood

The blood of Christ is the thread that runs through the Bible from beginning to end, tying it together into a comprehensive whole. It is the central theme—the very heartbeat of the living, active Word of God; everything points to it. Therefore, it is imperative for our spiritual formation that we gain a fuller understanding of it.

One morning recently I had an opportunity to do this. I was reading a scripture verse so familiar to me that its words almost didn't register on my consciousness. "The blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin" (1 John 1:7, NIV).

Suddenly I was struck with a new thought. I realized that the tense of the Greek word that is translated "purifies" indicates an ongoing action, not a one-time occurrence.

I continued reading, now with awakened curiosity. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (v. 9). I was further impressed by the idea that Jesus not only forgives our sins but also purifies us from all unrighteousness. So His blood serves two purposes in our lives.

In order to fully appreciate these purposes, we need to understand that the blood in our physical bodies is a symbol of a greater spiritual reality.

Shadow and Substance This should not surprise us, for we know that one way God reveals Himself is through His creation. "Since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—His eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse" (Rom. 1:20). The qualities of God that we cannot observe directly by using our physical senses can be observed in His creation.

To put it simply, creation is always talking about God. That which is invisible has become visible in the form of God's creation. Thus Earth is a model of heaven.

According to Psalm 19:1, the earth is always "declaring" (putting on display, announcing) the "glory of God" (His invisible qualities). God's material creation is an allegory to illustrate spiritual reality.

God created the earth to be a visual representation of the invisible heavens in every detail. The operating principles of the spiritual realm (heaven) are portrayed in creation (Earth).

The material realm is temporary; the spiritual realm is eternal. The material realm is the shadow; the spiritual realm is the substance. The material realm is the picture; the spiritual realm is the reality.

Our blood is an earth-substance that God gave us to illustrate a spiritual reality. It is a copy or shadow of what blood means in heaven. God pointed us to this illustration in His creation by saying, "'For the life of a creature is in the life of every creature is its blood'" (Lev. 17:11,14). Blood is the material illustration of a spiritual reality called "life."

Your bloodstream is the delivery system for everything your body needs for life. Everything your cells need to thrive—the minerals, vitamins, nutrients, oxygen— is delivered to them through your bloodstream.

Your bloodstream also washes away the toxins that your cells release as they work. The cells in your body have no other source for nourishment, oxygen or cleansing except the bloodstream.

As blood flows through your body, old things pass away and new things take their place. The blood purifies you of anything

that will diminish your body's ability to function at its optimum.

If your body were working perfectly with every organ in full health, yet your blood were drained out, your life would be gone. Your life is in your blood (see v. 11).

Now, what is it that makes atonement? "It is the blood that makes atonement for one's life" (v. 11). Why does blood make atonement? Because it is the life.

What has eternal value—the red, sticky stuff called "blood," or the life it represents? The blood has eternal value—not in its own right but because it is the shadow of the life. Blood is what God created to stand for and picture the life.

The Scriptures declare that in the cosmos (the whole continuum of reality, including both heaven and earth), there is only one life. "In Him was life" (John 1:4). "I life" (John 14:6). "He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life" (1 John 5:12).

Only Jesus is life. Life does not exist apart from Him. Everything else that passes for life in the earth-realm is really death in disguise.

We are born with an Adamic life that is sin-diseased and infected with unrighteousness. The natural life that flows through our spirit-veins carries death.

Apart from Jesus we are on a steady march toward death. Only through Him can we "[pass] from death to life" (1 John 3:14). His life is the only life that exists in all creation.

Where is His life? It's in His blood!

His Life in us In Jesus' day, the Jews also grappled with this mystery. In responding to an argument among them, Jesus said, "'I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you.

'Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For My flesh is real food and My blood is real drink. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood remains in Me, and I in him'" (John 6:54-56).

What did Jesus want us to understand? Why did He make this unsettling statement?

He is saying: "My life must be inside you. My life must be flowing through your spirit-veins."

Jesus wants to transfuse us with His life. Just as blood flows through your physical veins, His life, His blood, must flow through your spirit-veins. Just as your natural body is given life through blood, so your spirit has life through the blood of Christ.

Jesus' blood has two functions in our lives:

1. Reconciliation to God. Jesus' blood was spilled out for payment of our sin. "We were reconciled to [God] through the death of His Son" (Rom. 5:10).

His life imparted the value to His blood. Because not one drop of sin's infection invaded His life, His blood was deemed pure.

I believe that when Jesus, our atonement sacrifice, died on a cross, every last drop of His blood spilled out. In the Old Testament, a blood sacrifice required that all the blood be drained from the animal.

It cost a whole life—every last drop—to atone for a life. All His blood was spent to reconcile us to the Father. We were reconciled to God through the death of His Son—through His blood shed on the cross.

2. Purification from sin. Jesus' Spirit-blood was poured out before the Father in the heavenly tabernacle and now runs through our spirit-veins. "How much more, having been

reconciled, shall we be saved through His life" (v. 10).

After He, the eternal High Priest, had offered Himself as the atonement for our sins, He then performed the second act with the blood. He entered into the holy of holies, the tabernacle in heaven, there to pour out His blood on the mercy seat.

"When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, He went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation. He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but He entered the Most Holy Place once for all by His own blood, having obtained eternal redemption" (Heb. 9:11-12).

Christ took His own blood, not the blood of goats and bulls, into the real tabernacle. He poured out His life on the mercy seat—the life that had met and conquered sin; the life that had mastered death; the life that had fulfilled the requirements for righteousness.

Just as blood is the delivery system for everything your body needs to thrive physically, so the life of the Son is the delivery system for everything you need to thrive spiritually. "His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence" (2 Pet. 1:3).

What happened to the blood Jesus poured out in the Father's presence? The Bible says, "On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity" (Zech. 13:1).

Jesus' blood became a flowing fountain rather than a stagnant pool. The fountain of His blood flows through you and me to continually cleanse us from sin and impurity and to bring us perpetual newness of life.

The blood that Jesus poured out on the mercy seat before the

Father flows through you now. His blood in Spirit form flows from heaven's mercy seat through you.

HIS POWER IN US

The ever-flowing blood of Jesus is the delivery system for God's power. The power works in the blood. His life—His blood in Spirit form—flows through us just as blood flows through our bodies.

The blood of Jesus, as noted earlier, purifies us continually from all sin and unrighteousness. Look at 1 John 1:9 again: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

How does blood purify? It does so from the inside. It cleanses only as it flows through us.

Jesus Himself lives in and through us. His life flows through us as blood flows through our natural bodies. That fountain of life, Zechariah said, is for cleansing from both sin and impurity (see Zech. 13:1). Christ died to get us into heaven; He lives to get heaven into us.

God will forgive our sins; we are reconciled to Him by Jesus' death. And He will purify the unrighteousness that causes us to sin; we are saved by His life. You and I have inside the very life of Jesus, because His blood, the delivery system for all the power of God, flows through us.

Read a companion devotional.

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