

THE SPRINKLING OF THE BLOOD

1 Peter 1:2

INTRODUCTION

- Job asked a question that multitudes have asked throughout history, “How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?” (Job 25:4)
- The false religions of the world have devised various rituals by which a sinner is said to be cleansed
 - ✓ Hindus bathe in a “holy” river, such as the Ganges
 - ✓ Muslims perform ritual washings that purify them
 - ✓ Catholics apply “holy water” to purify sinners
 - ✓ Aboriginals believe smoke cleanses people
- Under the Old Covenant, there were rites of purification that utilised water
- The Jews of Jesus’ day multiplied these forms of purification, which God did not authorise (Mark 7:3), and the Lord rebuked them for it (Mark 7:8,15)
- But in God’s economy, it is not *water* that makes a man accepted with God, but the *blood* of sacrifice
- Blood is inextricably connected to *life* (Genesis 9:4; Leviticus 17:11)

- God provided a way by which sins could be atoned for – through the blood of animals, sacrificed in substitution for sinful men (Leviticus 1:3-5)
- Without the shedding of blood is no remission [forgiveness] (Hebrews 9:22)
- However, these sacrifices were inadequate, in that they could only “cover sin”, but never take it away, and needed to be continually offered (Hebrews 10:4, 11)
- Those sacrifices prophetically pointed to an infinitely greater sacrifice, one that has the power to completely remove sins, and that would never have to be repeated
- Jesus Christ offered himself, “one sacrifice for sins for ever” (Hebrews 10:12), fulfilling the shadows and types in the sacrifices of the Old Testament
- It is not merely the *death* of Jesus that accomplished our salvation, but the *blood* that he shed in his death (Romans 5:9-10)
- The blood of Christ is at the core of the gospel, and of Christianity – to omit or deny it is to corrupt the gospel itself
- Liberal theologian and pastor Harry Emerson Fosdick said the doctrine of the blood atonement was a slaughterhouse religion, and called it “precivilized barbarity”
- Playwright George Bernard Shaw once angrily attacked fundamental Christianity by saying, “It is saturated with the ancient – and to me quite infernal – superstition of atonement by blood sacrifice, which I believe Christianity

must completely get rid of, if it is to survive among thoughtful people”

- The blood of Jesus:
 - ✓ Justifies (Romans 5:9)
 - ✓ Washes (Revelation 1:5)
 - ✓ Redeems (Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14; Peter 1:18-19; Revelation 5:9)
 - ✓ Purges (Hebrews 9:14)
 - ✓ Reconciles (Ephesians 2:13; Colossians 1:20)
 - ✓ Sanctifies (Hebrews 10:29; 13:12)
 - ✓ Cleanses (1 John 1:7)
- We have been considering in this verse the salvation of the believer, and the role of each of the Persons of the Godhead in bringing that salvation to pass
 - ✓ God the Father *thought* it
 - ✓ God the Spirit *brought* it
 - ✓ God the Son *bought* it
- Concerning God the Father, the believer is saved when chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world
- Concerning God the Son, the believer is saved when Christ died at Calvary
- Concerning God the Spirit, the believer is saved the moment he repents and believes the gospel
- Notice Peter does not say the believer is elect unto the *shedding* of blood, but the *sprinkling* of blood
- The use of this word is a clear allusion to the Old Testament Levitical rites that involved the sprinkling of animal blood

- There are many instances of the blood being sprinkled on objects such as the altar (Leviticus 3:2) or the sanctuary (Leviticus 4:6)
- But there only three instances where blood is sprinkled upon *people* and these reveal to us the purpose of the sprinkling of Christ's blood on his people

I. THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT

A. A “covenant” is an “agreement” between two parties

1. There are numerous covenants made between God and men in Scripture – Adamic, Noahic, Abrahamic, Palestinian, Mosaic, Davidic and New Covenants
2. Some are *conditional*, requiring the obedience of man, while others are *unconditional* promises of God to man
3. Covenants were ratified with a blood sacrifice, indicating the need for atonement for sin in order for divine blessings to be communicated to man

B. The Mosaic Covenant was established between God and Israel at Mount Sinai (Exodus 24:3-8)

1. God gave the nation his law and the people agreed to keep it (Exodus 24:3,7)
2. The nation was promised blessings for obedience, and curses for disobedience (Deuteronomy 11:26-28)

3. Moses took the blood of sacrifices, and with half he sprinkled the altar, and with the other half he sprinkled the people (Hebrews 9:18-21)
 4. It was not their verbal promise alone that sealed the covenant, but the application of the blood
- C. The New Covenant is sealed and ratified by the blood of Jesus Christ
1. At the Last Supper, Jesus said, “This is my blood of the new testament” (Matthew 26:28)
 2. Those who come to Christ in faith are come “to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel” (Hebrews 12:24)
 3. The moment a sinner believes unto salvation, he is sprinkled, as it were, with the blood of Jesus Christ, entering him into the New Covenant, with all its blessings such as justification and eternal life
 4. Just as Moses sprinkled blood on both the altar and the people, so Christ’s blood appears on the heavenly altar for the forgiveness of sinners (Hebrews 9:12), and is also applied to believers, identifying them as participants in that forgiveness
- D. The blood of sprinkling in heaven “speaks” for pardoned sinners (Hebrews 12:24)
1. The blood of Abel cried out unto God “vengeance” and “justice”

2. The blood of Christ cries out “pardon”, “forgiveness” and “peace”
3. *Blood has a voice to pierce the skies,
“Revenge!” the blood of Abel cries;
But the dear stream when Christ was slain
Speaks peace as loud from every vein. (Watts)*

II. THE BLOOD OF CLEANSING

- A. At the purification of a leper, the blood of a bird was sprinkled upon him seven times (Leviticus 14:6-7)
- B. Leprosy is a type of sin
 1. It makes us outcasts (Isaiah 59:2)
 2. It deforms and destroys
 3. It is incurable by human means
- C. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses filthy and unclean sinners (1 John 1:7)
 1. Like the diseased lepers, in our sins we are forced to cry, “Unclean, unclean!” (Leviticus 13:45)
 2. But the blood of Christ makes even the foulest clean
 3. Job’s question is answered in Christ’s blood (Job 25:4)

III. THE BLOOD OF CONSECRATION

- A. Aaron and his sons were sprinkled with blood at their ordination (Exodus 29:21)

1. The blood of a ram, along with anointing oil, were sprinkled on the priests and their garments
 2. The blood of justification cleansed them, and the oil of sanctification separated them
 3. The purpose was that they be “hallowed” for the priestly service of the tabernacle
- B. The blood of Christ not only pardons the believer, but sanctifies and hallows him for spiritual service
1. The priesthood no longer belongs to one family in one tribe, but to all believers (1 Peter 2:5,9)
 2. As the Levites and priests belonged to God as his chosen servants (Numbers 3:12), so the Christian has been bought with a price, and is duty-bound to glorify God with his being (1 Corinthians 6:20)
- C. It is only to the blood-sprinkled believer that grace and peace may be multiplied
1. Grace (*charis*) is the Greek salutation, while peace (*eirene*) is the Hebrew salutation
 2. The verb “be multiplied” (*plethuntheie*) is in the optative mood, which expresses a wish or prayer
 3. Peter’s prayer for his readers was that they would know and experience God’s grace to sustain them and God’s peace to settle them even as they endured tribulation

CONCLUSION

1. It is not only the *shedding* of the blood (the availability), but the *sprinkling* of it (the application) that is necessary
2. Christ's blood was *shed* for all, but is *sprinkled* only on those who obey the gospel (1 Timothy 4:10)
3. Have you been sprinkled by the blood of Christ by trusting in his atonement alone for your salvation?
4. Do you know the peace of conscience in having the stain and guilt of sin washed away in Christ's blood?
5. And are you demonstrating in your life the blood of consecration, living for Christ's glory, as "a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work" (2 Timothy 2:21)