

THE BLOOD OF CHRIST

"And they sang a new song, saying: 'You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your Blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation.'" Revelation 5:9

COMPLEX INFRASTRUCTURE

Any city requires well-organised delivery and defense systems. Every municipal area requires supplies of water, food and electricity. These supplies are delivered through a complex infrastructure. Thousands of trucks travel down the freeways, roads and side streets delivering essential supplies to stores and homes. Other trucks remove refuse to allow the city to function effectively and thrive.

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

It is a biological fact that our bodies have a transportation system far more complex and complete than that of a metropolis. Our bodies' transportation system cuts through every tissue and organ by means of a network of approximately 100,000km of blood vessels. Each cell of your body is a hair's breadth from a blood capillary. The heart of this vast system is a pump about the size of an apple that has to pump thousands of liters of blood through its chambers every day, sending blood to every part of your body. This blood carries vital, life giving oxygen and nutrients to every cell in your body.

COURIER SYSTEM

Your body has approximately 25 trillion red blood cells which are much like a postal courier service carrying all kinds of packages, such as oxygen, that are needed by the cells in your body.

OXYGEN

Every cell in your body requires oxygen to remain alive. If the blood is cut off to any part of your body it deprives that part of the body of oxygen and that will cause death to that body part. If the brain is deprived of oxygen it causes a stroke and that part of the brain dies. If the heart is deprived of oxygen, such as because of a blockage in an artery, that will cause a heart attack.

PROTECTION

While the red blood cells transport essential nutrients and life giving oxygen, the white blood cells in your body are like billions of little tanks protecting your body from infection and disease. There are five different types of these white blood cells and each one is trained to go after a different enemy. Just one drop of your blood can contain anything from 7000 to 25,000 white blood cells. The number of them increases when your body is fighting an illness. It works much like the military calling up reserves in a time of war. In times of illness and infection your body will multiply the number of white blood cells to fight the infection and to protect you health.

FACTORIES

As far as our skeletal structure is concerned, our bones do double duty. Not only do they support our body, keeping us upright, and keeping us from being like jellyfish, but the bones are hollow. On the inside of these bones are marvelous little factories that operate day and night producing billions of these little red blood cell delivery trucks and white blood cell defensive tanks.

CO-ORDINATION

Overseeing and co-coordinating the entire operation is the brain, and the heart which keeps the blood flowing.

THE LIFE IS IN THE BLOOD

Over 3400 years ago God said: *"For the life of the flesh is in the blood..."* Leviticus 17:11. No one could have understood until quite recently just how profound that truth is.

The first reference we have to blood in the Bible is in Genesis 4:10-11: *"What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground. So now you are cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand."*

"For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you, upon the altar, to make atonement for your soul; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul." Leviticus 17:11

WHOEVER SHEDS MAN'S BLOOD

After the flood God communicated a covenant with Noah and his descendants *"for perpetual generations"* (Genesis 9:4-12). *"Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed; for in the image of God He made man."* Genesis 9:6

"And according to the Law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission." Hebrews 9:22

FREEDOM

"As for you also, because of the blood of your covenant, I will set your prisoners free..." Zechariah 9:11

PROTECTION

"Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see that blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt." Exodus 12:13

THE FOUNTAIN OF SALVATION

"In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness." Zechariah 13:1. The Blood of Christ is a synonym for the Gospel. It is the Blood of Christ that redeems us from all sin. *"But this is My blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."* Matthew 26:28

THE LAMB OF GOD

The first greeting that Christ received was that which hailed the power of His Blood when John the Baptist cried out: *"Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world."* John 1:29

REDEEMED BY HIS BLOOD

And the last recorded salutation that Christ will receive will be the Song of the Redeemed: *"You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seal; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your Blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation... Worthy is the Lamb Who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and blessing... blessing and honour and glory and power be to Him Who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!"* Revelation 5:9-13

FULL ATONEMENT

Sin is the breaking of the Law of God. A broken Law demands a penalty. The wages of sin is death. All men have broken the Law of God and are under the sentence of eternal death. Christ Jesus died as our substitute, in our place. He rendered complete obedience to the Law of God and made full atonement for our sins. *"And by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in Heaven, having made peace through the Blood of His cross."* Colossians 1:20

PRECIOUS

The Puritan writer, John Milton, declared that the greatness and sacredness of man's soul is attested to by two facts: First, that the creation of his soul is in the image of the Eternal God. Second, that the price that has been paid for the redemption of the soul is the precious Blood of Christ.

SET FREE

Christ redeemed us from the bondage and slavery of sin. *"Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct...but with the precious Blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."* 1 Peter 1:18-19

RECONCILED

Sin had alienated and separated us from God. *"Behold, the Lord's Hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue has muttered perversity."* Isaiah 59:1-3

"And by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in Heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross." Colossians 1:20

Even in human relationships, wrongdoing produces separation and alienation. The divorce courts are full of examples of how evil doing separates and alienates those who were once close. And if that is true between people, it is also true between God and man. Sin always alienates and separates us from the presence of God. The question is: How can man and God be reconciled? By the precious Blood of Christ.

The Blood of Jesus Christ justifies us from the guilt of sin, it redeems us from the slavery of sin, it reconciles us after the separation of sin, and it cleanses our consciences from the burden and shame of sin.

"But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the Blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin." 1 John 1:7

"Much more then, having now been justified by His Blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him." Romans 5:9

THE HOLY GRAIL

According to legend, Joseph of Arimathea, who took down the body of Christ from the cross, carried the vessel, the Holy Grail, in which he had caught some of the blood of Christ, to Glastonbury, where you can still see the ruins of the cathedral on an island in Somerset. There in Glastonbury, Joseph formed the order of Knights whose duty it was to protect the precious Blood. The chief of these knights was made their king. At certain seasons, the king unveiled the golden cup, which held the precious blood. Then glorious and radiant light fell on the faces of all the knights and endued them with strength from on high. But only the pure in heart could look upon that cup and behold the light which streamed from the blood of Christ. This beautiful story has played a great part in the songs and poetry of our race.

The Scripture says that *"though your sins be as scarlet, they will be as white as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."*

"There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel's veins and sinners plunge beneath that flood, lose all their guilty stains."

"Whom God set forth as a propitiation by His Blood..." Romans 3:25

"Having now being justified by His Blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him." Romans 5:9

"In Him we have redemption by His Blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the richness of His grace." Ephesians 1:7

SAVED BY THEIR BLOOD

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the creator of the Sherlock Holmes series, wrote a book on the history of the Anglo Boer War in which he tells of a detachment of British soldiers who were overwhelmed by the Boers and fell back under heavy fire. Their wounded lay in a perilous position facing certain death. One of them, a corporal in the Ceylon Mounted Infantry, later told that they all realised that they had to come immediately under the protection of a Red Cross flag if they wanted to survive. All they had was a piece of white cloth but no red paint. So they used the blood from their own wounds to make a large cross on that white cloth. When the Boers saw the red cross on a white flag, the firing ceased. A truce was called, and the Boers stood back while the British wounded were carried to safety.

THE STONE TABLE

In C. S. Lewis's book *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, Edmund had been enslaved by the White Witch. He had been foolish, rebellious and evil. He had become a traitor to his own brother and sisters.

When the great lion, Aslan, came to rescue him, the Wicked Witch reminded him of the deep magic that was written on the stone table - that every traitor belonged to her and she had the right to the blood of every sinner.

Then, to the amazement of all, after Aslan spoke privately to her she let Edmund go. Later that night, Aslan surrendered himself into the witch's camp. They took him, shaved off his magnificent mane, ridiculed him, beat him, spat upon him and tied him upon the stone table. The witch sharpened her knife, drew near to him and plunged it into the lion's heart, killing him.

From a distance, Lucy and Susan wept in grief. The next morning, they went to recover his body. But they found the stone table broken and the body of Aslan was nowhere to be seen. Then turning around they saw him and found him larger than they've ever seen him before, shaking his magnificent mane, fully and physically alive. Susan and Lucy hugged and kissed Aslan, weeping for joy. Then they asked him: *"But Aslan, what does this mean?"*

Aslan replied: *"It means that though the witch knew the deep magic, there is a magic deeper still which she did not know. Her knowledge only goes back to the dawn of time. But if she could have looked a little further back, into the stillness and darkness before time dawned, she would have read there that when a willing victim who had committed no treachery was killed in the traitor's stead, the table would crack and death itself would start working backwards."*

PIERCED FOR OUR TRANSGRESSIONS

"He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities, the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed...the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all...for the transgression of my people He was stricken...and the Lord makes His life a guilt offering...my Righteous Servant will justify many, and He will bear their iniquities." Isaiah 53:5-11

Christ is our Passover Lamb (1 Corinthians 5:6-8); our Sin Offering (Romans 8:3); our Atonement (Romans 3:25). When Christ, the perfect Son of God, a Lamb without spot or blemish (1 Peter 1:19) shed His precious Blood on the Cross it was a substitutionary death. He died for us, in our place (1 Peter 3:18), the innocent for the guilty, the just in the place of the unjust.

"He is the propitiation for our sins." 1 Peter 2:2

"This is love: Not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sin." 1 John 4:10

A VISION OF CHRIST'S CROSS AND BLOOD

Raymond Lull was born in 1132 into a wealthy family on an island off the coast of Spain. His early life was spent in debauchery and as he later put it, *"utter immorality."* Yet he was recognised by his peers in Spain as a young man of brilliance and promise. During his early 30s, Raymond was born again as a result

of a vision where he saw *"the Saviour hanging upon His cross, the blood trickling from His hands and feet and brow, looking reproachfully"* at him. As a result, Raymond Lull gave his life to Christ and devoted himself to the ministry, becoming a missionary to the Muslims, eventually dying a martyr's death at age 80 while taking the Gospel to Muslims. It was his vision of the Cross and Blood of Christ that led him to take up his cross and shed his own blood in the service of the Saviour.

TRANSFORMED BY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST

Count Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf was born into one of Europe's leading families in the year 1700. He grew up in an atmosphere of Bible reading, prayer and hymn singing. He excelled in school and seemed to possess all the qualities for national leadership. After finishing his studies at the University of Wittenberg, Zinzendorf embarked on a grand tour of Europe attending lectures and visiting museums, palaces and universities.

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE FOR CHRIST?

It was while visiting the art museum at Dusseldorf that the young Count von Zinzendorf had a deeply moving experience that changed the rest of his life. As he looked upon *Domenico Feti's Ecce Homo (Behold, the Man)*, a portrait of the suffering Saviour with crown of thorns, he read the inscription below this famous portrait: *"I did this for thee! What has thou done for Me?"*

Count Nicholas von Zinzendorf admitted: *"I have loved Him for a long time, but I have never actually done anything for Him. From now on, I will do whatever He leads me to do."*

It was this testimony that I remember hearing on the 3rd of April 1977 that led me to stand up, walk forward and bow before Christ giving my life to Him. That very night I clearly remember determining that I would spend the rest of my life serving Christ.

Count Nicholas von Zinzendorf went on to found a spiritual community on his property, Herrnhut. This dynamic community experienced spiritual revival and launched a continuous prayer chain that lasted for over 150 years - during which time they sent out over 2500 Moravian missionaries worldwide.

We also read the testimony of Frances Ridley Havergal, the British musician and devotional writer, who visited that same art museum in Dusseldorf, Germany, in January 1858. While gazing upon this same picture of Christ she was struck by the caption: *"I did this for thee! What hast thou done for Me?"*

Deeply moved Frances Havergal wrote some lines of poetry to be the basis for a hymn. Later she was not satisfied with this first attempt and tossed the paper into the fire, but the pages fell out untouched. Some months later she showed them to her father who encouraged her to preserve them. He even wrote a melody to accompany her words. The resulting hymn: *I Gave My Life For Thee* was first published in 1860 and launched Frances Ridley Havergal as a serious composer of hymns:

*"I gave My life for thee,
My precious blood I shed,
that thou mightst be and quickened from the dead.
I gave, I gave My life for thee;
What hast thou given for Me?"*

Francis Havergal went on to compose such classic hymns such as: *"Like a River Glorious"*, *"Who Is On the Lord's Side?"*, *"I Am Trusting Thee Lord Jesus"*, and *"Take My Life and Let It Be."*

DRAWN TO CALVARY

The one time slave trader, John Newton, who after his conversion wrote the classic hymn *Amazing Grace* also wrote these words on his vision of the Cross:

*"In evil long I took delight
unawed by shame or fear,
till a new object struck my sight*

*and stopped my wild career.
I saw One hanging on a tree
in agonies and blood,
Who fixed His languid eyes on me,
as near His cross I stood."*

Have you ever been to Calvary? Have you seen a vision of the Cross?

Charles Spurgeon once said: *"Stand at the foot of the Cross, and count the purple drops by which you have been cleansed. See the crown of thorns, mark His scourged shoulders, still gushing with incriminated rolls..."* and if you do not surrender your life to Christ *"on the ground before that Cross, you have never seen it."*

Have you seen it? Have you been to Calvary?

"But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by His Blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through Him! For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to Him through the death of His Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through His life! Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom we have now received reconciliation."
Romans 5:8-11

Christ died for you. **Are you living for Him?**

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