

The Blood of Sprinkling

by G.W. North

The blood of Jesus Christ is the means by which we are cleansed from all sin and made holy, and it is the superior means of redemption, justification, and sanctification.

Scripture: John 1:29, Romans 5:9, Ephesians 1:7, Colossians 1:14, Hebrews 9:12, Hebrews 10:4, 1 Peter 1:18-19, 1 John 1:7, 1 John 3:9, Revelation 1:5

Topics: "Redemption", "Cleansing through Christ"

Description

G.W. North emphasizes the significance of the blood of Jesus as the ultimate cleansing agent for sin, contrasting it with the Old Testament sacrifices. He explains that while the blood of bulls and goats provided temporary atonement, the blood of the Lamb offers permanent redemption and sanctification, cleansing us from both known and unknown sins. North highlights the importance of walking in the light to experience continuous cleansing and the distinction between sins of ignorance and known sins. He asserts that true believers, while acknowledging their imperfections, are empowered by the blood of Christ to live in fellowship with God without habitual sin. Ultimately, the sermon reveals the profound mystery of redemption through the blood of Jesus, which is effective for all sin, past and present.

Transcript

Turning to the New Testament we discover that John is the great advocate of the Lamb: he sets Him forth in his Gospel and exalts Him in the Revelation. To John the blood is 'the blood of THE LAMB', and there is no other blood beside. It is exclusively of the Lamb's blood he is speaking when he says, 'the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin'. That his mind is also taken up with the ritual associated with the events of the Day of Atonement can hardly be doubted, for closely following the above remark he says of Jesus Christ the righteous that 'He is the propitiation (Gk. place of propitiation, or Propitiatory - Mercy Seat) for our sins'. He makes no reference to bulls or goats, yet with spiritual insight and divine understanding the apostle is dealing in this section of his epistle with sins of ignorance. These are the sins which are being constantly cleansed from us as we walk in the light, sins of which we are ignorant, sins not recognised as such by us, mistakes, sometimes repeatedly made, words, works, tones, deportment - so many things about us which are as yet unlike Jesus whom we love so well. This is the continuous function and ministry of the blood to us as we walk on in the light unto the full image and likeness of sonship.

Lower down in the epistle John deals with the other side of the sin question, and in this shows the hand of the same God at work. There must be clear understanding of heart and absolute cleavage in the mind

between known sin and sins of ignorance. This passage deals with known sin, stating that 'he who is born of God does not commit sin', going even further and saying 'he cannot sin'. This is a very strong statement, which at first may appear by implication to be contradictory in spirit to what he has said earlier. So much so in fact that some have dared to alter the text in order to tone it down to some degree. But all to no avail. God cannot be corrected, and to tamper with His word is in itself sin, and an attempt to administer Him a rebuke. John meant what he said, and seeing that he was God's amanuensis, so does God. Nevertheless, the two seemingly contradictory passages do present a problem to many devout souls who have not seen the distinction drawn by God between sins in this manner.

Unseen by us but known to God there is an iniquity even about our holy things because there is a part of us as yet unredeemed. By His power and in His grace God can and does sanctify to us things that originated in sin and came from satan via the fall into the human race. He also sanctifies unto Himself what He has not yet redeemed, but not by the coverage afforded under the old covenant by atonement. In the New Covenant sanctification is by the cleansing power of the blood of the lamb. However, although He does guarantee entire sanctity, God cannot overlook the evil origins of things, or shut His eyes to their nature. Nevertheless, upon His terms He keeps us cleansed by the blood, sanctifying us from all evil unto fellowship with Himself and each other without sin. For this reason no one taught of God says he has no sin. He does claim to have the seed of God in him though, and believes he does not habitually commit sin; parallel with that he also knows he is not without errors and needs cleansing constantly from them. Each of these is a manifestation of the power of the original intentions of satan and the purpose of his present contamination of the saints who may be unaware of these things. They are glaringly offensive to God though, and must be purged by the momentary cleansing of the blood. God does not now allow for an annual cleansing, He sanctifies by permanent cleansing administered constantly.

The holy things of the Old Testament, though they were inanimate things and amoral, had to be atoned for also, therefore annual cleansing was administered to all these that they should be sanctified to God too. This done they were fitted for continued use for another year. As the people's sins of ignorance were counted as covered on the Day of Atonement so that Israel could continue as a nation, so were the 'holy things', which the priests handled and thereby contaminated, cleansed and given further permission to continue in use.

All this is bound up in the great mystery of the redemption and the Redeemer; it lies deeply rooted in the still greater mystery of identification. How could Jesus be God and man at once? How could He be made sin and yet remain free from it at the same time? The answer to the second question is found in the correct answer to the first. No man can explain the mystery but all men may rejoice in it. Similarly we cannot explain how it is possible to be free from sin and yet never be able to say we have no sin: all depends upon the power of the blood of Jesus Christ and the pleasure of God. We may all rejoice in the experience of it though and cry with John 'the blood of Jesus Christ God's Son cleanses us from ALL sin'.

The retroactive aspect of the blood shed and then sprinkled on the mercy seat on the Day of Atonement is very clear; that blood did not cover the future but the past. The children of Israel were not thereby granted another twelve months license to sin, but pardon for a past year of unrecognised sins and absolution from the punishment they deserved. Atonement must not be confused in the mind with indulgence; it was not a contrivance whereby permission to sin was gained from God. It was a method devised by God to cover the past twelve months of sin, and should draw our attention to His exceeding great patience and everlasting mercy. It was effective only for those who, upon recognition and conviction of some previous sin, had confessed it to God and brought Him the appropriate atonement at once. Although atonement gave

assurance about the future, it did not allow presumption.

Unlike the justification and sanctification afforded by the blood of the Old Testament atonements, the blood of the New Covenant does not cover sin. Superior to that it is sprinkled on hearts to actually cleanse away the sin. It is not the blood of atonement but the blood of redemption; we are actually redeemed from sin. But although the blood of Christ is effective throughout all eternity over the whole range of human sin, according to God's purposes, it is no more prospective in application than the blood of bulls and goats. The historic sacrifice and bloodshed of Jesus was sufficient to deal with all sin for ever. But no man must become presumptuous; a redeemed person may only experience the power and efficacy of the blood by continually walking in the light where constant cleansing is available. Cleansing is only moment by moment. It is designed by God to keep us instantly cleansed throughout this life as we walk in fellowship with Him on all matters. Permanent cleansing is only effected by instant cleansing.

It is important to notice that when thinking in terms of the animal creation and Jesus, nowhere does the scripture refer to Jesus' blood as the blood of a goat or of a bull; always it is presented as the blood of a lamb. Jesus is not called the goat of God or the bull of God but the Lamb of God; John says of Him that He (Himself the person), 'beareth away the sin of the world' and 'the blood of His Son cleanseth us from all sin'. Jesus the person bore it away bodily; Jesus' blood cleanses from the contamination of it. Redemption, justification and sanctification by cleansing combine in His blood and are set forth in the New Testament as superior to the coverage granted to Israel by atonement.

Something else of major importance confronts us here. A particular controversy which has long raged among theologians at once disappears when the word atonement is banished from our thinking and from the preaching of the New Covenant. Such phrases as 'partial atonement' or 'limited atonement' are seen to be misleading if only it is recognised that sin cannot be covered. If the thought of a collation of sins be retained, limited coverage might be entertained, but God in Christ did not principally deal with a multitude of sins, but with sin as a principle. Sin is the nature of the seed from which human life comes, defiling the springs of thoughts, expressing itself in words and actions. How then could God deal with it partially? It is not possible; there is no coverage for sin, only total exposure.

Principles cannot be dealt with by half, or by partial measures. Counter action extending to the whole, plus the introduction of new principles is the only way they may be dealt with. Less would leave them still operative and at best could only be considered repressive. This whole principle is revealed by redemption. The entire nation of Israel was redeemed in and from Egypt; redemption was all-inclusive. On the other hand justification was only operative for the individual who sought atonement for his sin - it was imputed to that person alone upon bloodshed and sacrifice. But the blood of the lamb upon the houses in Egypt was for the entire house of Israel. Although each house of each family was full of sinful men, if it was sprinkled with the blood of the lamb it was passed over by God. All Israel was redeemed, but of no Israelite was it said that he or she was justified or that atonement had been made. Atonement for sin was a later revelation.

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