

# **The Blood of Jesus, what does it signify?**

## **(Part 1)**

The blood of Jesus Christ, which he shed on the tree at Golgotha about 2000 years ago, provided the ransom required to free the people of God from the bondage of sin and death. However, because of the manner in which Christ's shed blood is being interpreted by a growing number of professed Christians, there is need for close study of the subject in the light of the Holy Scriptures.

The importance of the shed blood of Christ lies in the fact that it was the means God used to cleanse man from sin following the fall of Adam at the garden of Eden. It should be understood however that the blood of Christ is not a person or being anyone should pray to. It is not an end in itself as to take the place of the Creator.

St. Paul, in his letter to the Christians at Ephesus, explained that Jesus Christ had opened the door of faith to all the people of the world stating: "Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us." - Ephesians 2:11-14.

While travelling these days it is common for one to see one of the passengers praying for the driver, the tyre, and even the windscreen through which the driver sees – to be "covered with the blood of Jesus". Also, people today cover their businesses, homes, villages, towns and every imaginable situation with the blood of Jesus. Writing on the scriptural basis for this relatively recent phenomenon in Christianity, Mahesh Chavda, a senior pastor of All Nations Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, at page 121 of his book, *The Hidden Power of the Blood of Jesus*, conceded that many believers are confused by the expression "pleading the blood of Jesus". He nevertheless argued that "when we say 'the blood of Jesus' our prayers are amplified millions and millions of times, until the demons tremble". He had earlier contended at page 20 of the book that "there is power in the blood of Jesus Power to move heavens and earth on our behalf in fulfilment of God's purposes".

We must point out right away that, contrary to Mr. Chavda's assertion, there is no other formula for effective prayer than strong faith in God based on the correct understanding and practise of the word of God. The Bible says: "The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth." (Psalm 145:18) And our Lord Jesus Christ declared: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24) It is misleading to say that "there is power in the blood" because it is to Jesus Christ as a person that God gave power to save mankind as it is written: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life". – John 3:16; Matthew 9:6; Romans 5:18,19; John 11:25,26.

Those who claim to be Christians must make good their claim by doing things strictly in line with the will of God, and not behave like the natural Jews whom God Almighty said "take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit..." (Isaiah 30:1-3) Also, considering the way those who continually "plead the blood of Jesus" have been going about it, one could appreciate the more St. Paul's declaration in his letter to the Christians in Rome in which he observed that though the natural Jews had "a zeal for God" they were continually coming short of the righteousness of God because their zeal was "not according to

knowledge". He added: "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." -Romans 10:1-3.

#### Misapplied Texts

Bible quotations usually cited by those who plead the blood of Jesus for protection and blessing include virtually every text where blood is required for atonement, sanctification and deliverance. Among the most popular are Hebrews chapter 10 verse 19 and chapter 12 verse 24.

In Hebrews 10:19 Apostle Paul made reference to the images of the Temple service when he stated, "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus..." What did he mean? Under the Aaronic Priesthood, the High Priest entered into the part of the Tabernacle known as the "Holy of Holies" once a year. The Holy of Holies pictured the Heaven of Heavens, the dwelling place of God, into which Jesus Christ, the High Priest, (Hebrews 5:10; 6:20; etc.) entered and sat at the right hand of God. This he did soon after his resurrection, when he went to present the merits of his ransom sacrifice to God Almighty in heaven. (John 20:17) It was with this understanding that St. Paul stated that in contrast with the Levitical Priests who offered sacrifices for sins daily, Jesus Christ, after "he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God". (Hebrews 10: 12) Having been cleansed of inherited sin the worshippers of God, by virtue of the grace brought by Jesus Christ, are therefore candidates for the blessings which God promised would abound in His everlasting Kingdom. "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Romans 5:19; John 1:17

In Hebrews chapter 12 verses 22-24 St. Paul wrote about those who will be inheritors of the capital part of God's Kingdom in heaven known as Mount Zion. Apart from God Almighty, the Owner of the Kingdom, and the saints who constitute the "general assembly and church of the firstborn which are written in heaven", St. Paul spoke of Jesus Christ, "the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel". Those who believe in calling on the blood of Jesus for help hold to this last part ("the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel") as the basis for their contention that by means of the blood "they could overcome all forces of evil". But what did St. Paul have in mind? He was explaining the superiority of the new covenant of which Jesus Christ is the mediator through his shed blood to the old covenant God made with the natural Jews. He (St. Paul) then made reference to "the blood of sprinkling" a picture drawn from the pattern in the old order of things in which the priests sprinkled the blood of animals on the altar to sanctify it. — Exodus 24:8; 29:16; Leviticus 1:11.

How does the blood shed by Jesus Christ speak "better things than that of Abel"? Abel died imperfect; his blood was not meant to and cannot save anyone. It was Jesus Christ God used to save mankind. The Bible says "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." -Galatians 3:13.

It could be seen that these quotations do not in any way suggest that anyone should be calling on the blood of Christ for protection. The redeemed of the Lord who have now known that the Almighty God Jehovah and His Son Jesus Christ are their true benefactors should continually exercise strong faith in them and call upon them for help in time of need. — 1 Peter 3:10-13.

#### Atonement

Right from Old Testament times, God Almighty had made it clear that life is sacred and therefore man should not shed blood. At the end of the deluge, after Noah and his family had left the ark, God declared to Noah: "Whoso sheddeth blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man." - Genesis 9: 6,9,16.

By this covenant, God Almighty outlawed the unwarranted taking of life and laid the rule that the means of paying for any life or blood shed is by taking the life of the guilty person. The declaration that “whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed” foreshadows the law the Lord God gave the Jews through the Prophet Moses in which he declared that “(a perfect) life must go for ( a perfect) life”. -Deuteronomy 19:21.

Regrettably the world is not paying heed to this warning as they are busy killing and shedding innocent blood. The perpetrators will be judged and punished in God’s time, except they repent. – Hosea 4:1-3; Isaiah 24:5,6.

God Almighty also warned man against the eating of blood stating that it is with blood that atonement is made as it is written: “And whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood; I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.”-Leviticus 17: 10-14; See also Leviticus 3:17; 7:23-27; Deuteronomy 12:16,23-25.

The people needed to make sacrifices to make atonement for their sins always because though the law of God was perfect (Romans 7:12), the people were imperfect beings subject to errors as a result of which they violated the law of God, the penalty of which was death. The only remedy for escaping punishment was through the sacrifice of animals the life of which provided a substitute for the persons who had sinned. (Le 17:1-16) Apostle Paul declared: “And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission”. -Hebrews 9:22.

For the purpose of sanctification also, God Almighty set aside a day, known as the Day of Atonement. (Leviticus 23:27,28; 25:9) It fell on the 10th day of the 7th month, five days to the Feast of Tabernacles. The Day of Atonement was the only time the High Priest entered into the Holy of Holies. On that day the Priest, clad in holy linen garments, made atonement for himself, his family, and for all the assembly of Israel. In Leviticus 16:1-34 there are instructions to the High Priest for the purpose of sanctifying the people. The activities include killing the bullock of the sin-offering, sprinkling the blood on the mercy seat, killing the goat of the sin-offering, and selecting the scapegoat over whose head were confessed the transgressions of Israel before that creature was sent away into the wilderness of Judaea, carrying the people’s sins into “a solitary land”. These were living pictures that pointed to the redemptive work Jesus Christ would do to save mankind from sin and death. In the picture, the High Priest foreshadowed Jesus Christ, who as eternal High Priest, entered not “into the holy places made with hands” (Hebrews 9:24) but into heaven itself, offering his own blood, not merely sacrificing animals for man’s sins.

The basic teaching of atonement are that through man’s fault, the natural relationship between God and man has been broken; and that this communion can be restored by the removal of sin through the sacrifice and death of the Perfect One, Jesus Christ. The vicarious death of Christ was a demonstration of the perfect and complete love which God has for mankind. and showed how far God went to win His estranged children back into communion with Him. See John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 5:7; Romans 5:6-11,15-19; Hebrews 2:9,17;9:14; 1 John 2:1,2.

#### God and Christ

It is the name of God Almighty we should call through Jesus Christ when in danger or in need of any kind of help and not the blood of Jesus. In Isaiah 45:22 God declared: “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.” It is similarly stated in Joel 2:32 “And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered”. The name of the Lord is JEHOVAH and when the faithful call on Him He will come to their aid and deliver them. “Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.”

(Isaiah 12:2) That was why Solomon a prophet of God and king in Israel stated: "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." (Proverbs 18:10) We cannot fail to make reference to the admonition of David, a king and prophet of God who declared: " Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High: And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." – Psalm 50:14,15; See also Jeremiah 33:3.

Based on this understanding, the Jews, though they made sacrifices for atonement of sins from time to time, never prayed to God by calling on the blood of the animals they sacrificed. When in trouble they called on the name JEHOVAH for deliverance. The Holy Bible says: "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God". – Psalm 20:7; 2 Chronicles 20:15-30; Isaiah 37; etc.

It was after Christ's death and resurrection that God Almighty exalted him highly. He himself declared that all power in heaven and on earth had been given to him, obviously by the Father Jehovah. (Matthew 28:18) God Almighty then commanded that angels and men should worship Jesus Christ – Hebrews 1:6.

Expatiating on this St. Paul stated: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Philippians 2: 9-11; see also Revelation 5:12,13) This text makes it abundantly clear that it is the name of Jesus Christ, not his blood that worshippers of God should hold in reverence or call on from time to time.

It is appropriate at this juncture to ask how the idea of calling on the blood of Jesus Christ arose. It is a creation of the devil to mislead the people so that they will lose the benefit of the protection and blessing God has promised to those who trust in Him. The devil knows that when people pray amiss by not praying according to the will of God He will not answer them. – James 4:3; John 9:31; 1 John 3:22.

Jesus Christ is the mediator between God and men. (1 Timothy 2:5,6) He is the way to God (John 14:6) hence he instructed his disciples that they should pray to the Father in his name. He declared: "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son". (John 14:13) He repeated the charge in chapter 16 verse 23 thus: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." (See also John 15:16) It should be understood however that calling on God in the name of Jesus means calling on Him through Jesus Christ the only mediator between God and men. (1 Timothy 2:5,6; Acts 4:10-12) Evidently, those who instead of praying to God through His son are calling on the blood of Jesus have been misled.