

The Powerful Blood of Jesus

Joe Slater

We read about it in Scripture. We sing about it in church. Jesus shed His blood upon the cross at Calvary! But why? Oceans of blood have been shed throughout human history. What makes His blood different? Simply put, only Jesus' blood has the power to:

1) Wash/Cleanse us from sin. *"the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin"* (1 John 1:7). *"and washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb"* (Revelation 7:14).

2) Redeem us. *"In Him we have redemption through His blood"* (Ephesians 1:7). *"And have redeemed us to God by Your blood"* (Revelation 5:9).

3) Acquit us of the charge of sin. *"having been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him"* (Romans 5:9).

4) Sanctify us (make us holy). *"the blood of the covenant by which you were sanctified"* (Hebrews 10:29).

5) Bring us near to God. *"But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ"* (Ephesians 2:13).

6) Cleanse our conscience. *"how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"* (Hebrews 9:14).

7) Purchase the church. *"the church of the Lord which He purchased with His own blood"* (Acts 20:28).

Jesus spoke of *"all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Berechiah"* (Matthew 23:34). But even that righteous blood couldn't do what Jesus' blood does. Praise God for the blood of Christ!

Phoenix Without Ashes

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17)

I've always been amazed by the legend of the phoenix. For those who are unfamiliar, the phoenix is a mythological bird that lives, dies, and is then reborn from the remains of its predecessor. Some legends portray the phoenix as being consumed in a fiery blaze of glory; later, it rises anew from the ashes.

Although the phoenix is a myth, the concept it embodies manifests itself by the resilience of the human spirit. Throughout our world, people are often displaced by wars and natural disasters. And like the phoenix, many of these will rise, reclaim their former place, and find new life from that which has been lost.

God, through His mercy, has provided a way for humankind to experience rebirth. One achieves this by obeying the gospel of Christ. It is, for the child of God, a "phoenix" moment as the old man of sin dies in the baptismal grave and becomes a "new creation" (2 Cor. 5:17) through Christ. Jesus taught Nicodemus that a man must "be born again" (John 3:3) to see the kingdom of God." Have you found new life?

--Kenny Westmorland (Celina, TN)

MAKING LIGHT OF LIGHT!

"But they made light of it, and went their ways"
(Matthew 22:5a KJV).

Making light of something is to treat it as unimportant or trivial. Occasionally, we are given the opportunity to receive wonderful blessings from God, but we are careless in recognizing or handling them. If we choose to take steps down a dark direction in life, we can become cynical and stop caring about anything good.

In Matthew 22:1-14 we read Jesus' parable of the marriage feast, which was initially directed to the Jewish spiritual leaders. The story speaks of a king sending out an invitation to the marriage feast for his son. He sent his third invitation in verse 4, urging his invited guests to come and celebrate because *"everything is ready"* for the feast! But the invited guests made light of the invitation. The invitation offered was meant as a wonderful blessing. The spiritual application reveals that God had invited the Jews to the kingdom of His beloved Son. They made light of it.

Can we as Christians, be "making light of" the blessing of "His **light**"? Jesus proclaims that He is *"The Light of the world"* (John 8:12). The apostle John is using the word "Light" as a description of true knowledge and wisdom from above and was contrasted with the "world," meaning darkness and ignorance. What is Jesus proclaiming when He says, *"I am the Light"*? The Lord Jesus came to be our spiritual illuminator (John 1:4)! He is the only one who brings the illumination of knowledge from above to this spiritually dark world.

We are either "making light of **light**," and stumbling through this world with no purpose or we are actively following the **light**. Jesus said, *"He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the Light of life"* (John 8:12).

--Tom Walker (Englewood, CO)