



Around the Word
Bible Study
 Lent, 2016

The Blood of Christ
 Hebrews 12:18-29

The voice of Christ's blood:

"For the blood of Christ has a loud voice on the earth, when the responsive Amen of those who believe in Him comes from all nations. This is the voice of Christ's blood, because the clear voice of the faithful redeemed by His blood is the voice of the blood itself."

—St. Augustine of Hippo,
Contra Faustum

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Session 5: "The Blood That Bespeaks Us Righteous"

Every time God's people gather together in the Divine Service they are bespoken righteous through the forgiveness of sins in the absolution, the grace of God conveyed in the liturgy, the proclamation of Law & Gospel in the sermon, and in the body and shed blood of Christ which speaks a better word than Abel. These gifts make us righteous, imparting forgiveness, life, and salvation. This is the Gospel to which the blood of every martyr testifies. They have prevailed because they were bespoken righteous by the blood of Christ. They feared neither torture nor death, not even by crucifixion. The Lord had endured all of this for the sake of their righteousness, and thus they feared no death. By this same blood we too are bespoken righteous and in Christ we prevail.

Opening: Psalm 50

- ¹The Mighty One, God the LORD,
 speaks and summons the earth*
 from the rising of the sun to its setting.
- ²**Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty,*
 God shines forth.**
- ³Our God comes; he does not keep silence;*
 before him is a devouring fire,
 around him a mighty tempest.
- ⁴**He calls to the heavens above*
 and to the earth, that he may judge his people:**
- ⁵"Gather to me my faithful ones,*
 who made a covenant with me by sacrifice!"
- ⁶**The heavens declare his righteousness,*
 for God himself is judge!**
- ⁷"Hear, O my people, and I will speak;
 O Israel, I will testify against you.*
 I am God, your God.
- ⁸**Not for your sacrifices do I rebuke you;*
 your burnt offerings are continually before me.**
- ⁹I will not accept a bull from your house*
 or goats from your folds.
- ¹⁰**For every beast of the forest is mine,*
 the cattle on a thousand hills.**
- ¹¹I know all the birds of the hills,*
 and all that moves in the field is mine.
- ¹²**"If I were hungry, I would not tell you,*
 for the world and its fullness are mine.**
- ¹³Do I eat the flesh of bulls*
 or drink the blood of goats?
- ¹⁴**Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving,*
 and perform your vows to the Most High,**
- ¹⁵and call upon me in the day of trouble;*
 I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me."
Glory be to the Father and to the Son*

**and to the Holy Spirit;
 as it was in the beginning,*
 is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

Read Hebrews 12:18-29

v.18-21: ¹⁸For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest ¹⁹and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them. ²⁰For they could not endure the order that was given, "If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned." ²¹Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I tremble with fear."

Read Isaiah 6:1-6. What is Isaiah's initial reaction to being in the presence of God? What does he expect will happen to him? What happens instead?

Read Exodus 19:1-17 (especially v. 12-14, 16) According to v. 12, what was the penalty for profaning God's holiness? What transpired to allow Israel to come to the base of the mountain without profaning God's holiness? Look also at Exodus 24:1-11 (referenced also in the first study of this series). What occurred to make Nadab, Abihu, and the 70 elders of Israel worthy (righteous) to be in the presence of God on Mt. Sinai? See also Romans 6:23.

"After speaking of the wages of sin (Paul) has not kept to the same order, for he does not say, 'the wages of good deeds,' but 'the gift of God;' to show, that it was not of themselves that they were freed, nor was it a due they received, neither yet a return,

nor a recompense of labors, but by grace all these things came about.” —John Chrysostom

v.22-23: ²²But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, ²³and to the assembly of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect,

Read Galatians 4:21-31. How is Paul’s expressed concern for the Galatians echoed here in Hebrews 12 in the reminder of what it means to be justified in terms of one’s eternal future?

Read Psalm 48. How does this section of Hebrews help to see this psalm as prophetic concerning the heavenly Jerusalem?

In verse 23, the term “firstborn” is applied to those “who are enrolled in heaven.” Every other use of the term “firstborn” in the New Testament is a direct reference to Jesus Christ. In what way are we as believers now able to be called “firstborn?” See Colossians 1:15-23, especially verses 18 & 20.

How does Colossians 1:15-23 show what is meant by “the spirit of the righteous made perfect?” Who are “the righteous?” How are they made perfect?

v.24: ²⁴and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

Read Genesis 4:1-11 (especially verse 10). For what did Abel’s blood cry out? Read Hebrews 10:19, 1 John 1:7, & 1 John 5:7-8. To what does the Blood of Jesus testify? (See also stanza 4 of the hymn, “Glory be to Jesus” LSB, 433).

Read 1 Corinthians 11:25-26 & 1 Timothy 2:5-6. On what basis is Jesus the mediator of a new covenant?

Review Psalm 51 (especially verses 2, 7, 10, & 11). What relationship exists between cleanliness and righteousness?

Read Exodus 29:21, Leviticus 8:11 & 30, & Leviticus 16:19. For what purpose was blood sprinkled?

Read Romans 5:19 & Philippians 2:8. What relationship is there between Christ’s obedience, His shed blood, and our righteousness?

Read Matthew 27:25 and note the context. In what way are the

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people unwittingly asking to be bespoken righteous by the blood of Christ?

v.25: ²⁵See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven.

Read Luke 10:16 & Luke 16:31. How does unbelief contradict the testimony of Jesus to the father concerning our having been made righteous in Him? What critical reality is the unbeliever essentially denying?



v.26-27: ²⁶At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, “Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.” ²⁷This phrase, “Yet once more,” indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain.

To what event does the first part of v. 26 (above) refer? See Exodus 19:16-18.

Read Psalm 90 (especially verses 8-10), Psalm 102 (esp. v. 3 & 26-28), Daniel 7:13-14, & Matt 24:35. To what event does the second part of Hebrews 12:26 and all of Hebrews 12:27 refer?

v.28-29: ²⁸Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, ²⁹for our

God is a consuming fire.

Read Psalm 16 (esp. v.8). Whose presence is it that prevents a kingdom (or anything) from being “shaken?”

Read Acts 2:42 & Hebrews 10:19-25 and look back at Psalm 50 (the opening psalm in this study). What is “acceptable worship?” In what way are we bespoken righteous by the blood of Christ in the context of such worship?

Closing: Jesus, Thy Blood and Righteousness (LSB, 563)

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