

BAPTISM AND THE BLOOD OF CHRIST
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I had the privilege of speaking at a camp meeting in 2010. In one of my sermons entitled “The Righteousness of Christ,” I made the statement that the term “contacting the blood of Christ at baptism” was not in the Bible. This simple true statement caused a reaction by a few that would make you think I had committed some kind of heresy. I stand by that statement, it is not in Scripture and in fact I can’t find it in the writings of any of the early Restoration preachers.

I thought I knew what those who use the term “we contact the blood at baptism” meant, but since that meeting I no longer believe that I do know what they mean. I thought they meant “we receive the benefits of Christ’s atoning death (bloodshed at Calvary) at baptism.” I didn’t then and still don’t now have a problem with those who chose to use this unbiblical expression if by it they mean the death of Christ has a continuous efficacy for sin. However, I fear some mean that the actual blood of Christ is literally present at baptism. I now understand the reaction to my statement of fact.

Before giving my reasons for rejecting the idea that blood is physically present in the baptistery let me make a few statements of what I believe about baptism and the blood of Jesus. My reason for doing this is that some have twisted my statement to mean that I reject the idea of the blood (death) of Christ in redemption. This is not true. (1) I believe that in baptism our sins are washed away if we believe, repent, and confess Jesus as Lord. (2) I believe that the blood Jesus shed at His death followed by His resurrection 2000 years ago are what gives baptism the power to save. (3) I believe that to refuse baptism is to refuse salvation. (4) I believe that baptism is the time when and the place where salvation is received and the new birth begins. (5) I believe His blood (death) was necessary for salvation of mankind.

I admit that in the past I think I may have used this expression or one similar to it (I am uncertain whether I have or not). However, since my early days of preaching I have come to realize how misleading those words can be to an unbeliever, and I will not use that expression for the following reasons.

- As stated, the expression is not in the Bible. This is a fact that can't be refuted. Further, the word "contact" is not used in the KJV. It is used in the NIV in Hag. 2:13, but it is not in the original languages. The word is added as an aid in translation and is talking about touching a dead body.
- Therefore, there is no commandment for us to "contact" the blood of Christ.
- I also agree with Roger Chambers who stated, "If you want to contact the blood of Jesus you'll have to go to Jerusalem, find the place where they crucified Him, and dig in the sands until you find it." It was real not mystical.
- The term "contacting the blood" smacks of Roman Catholicism and their belief in transubstantiation. By that term they mean that when we partake of the communion (administered by a Catholic priest) that the juice and bread literally turn into the blood and body of Jesus.
 - This is not only wrong but if it were true we'd be guilty of cannibalism every time we partake of the Lord's Supper.
- This is, at best, mystical Christianity and at its worst is eating flesh and drinking blood, which is sinful.
 - If the blood of Jesus is actually present in each baptism Jesus would have to bleed each time someone is baptized. If this is the case, a physical miracle would take place at each baptism. Not only so, but if this were the case and thousands if not millions have been baptized since His death no human body contains that much blood (another miracle). The Bible says Jesus died once for all, not once for each person individually, Hebrews 7:27.
- One of the greatest reasons I believe as I do is that believing the literal blood of Jesus is present in the baptismal waters does the opposite of what Jesus was trying to teach us. That is, He used physical things to teach a spiritual truth. To believe His actual blood is present at baptism would be taking a spiritual truth and returning to a physical interpretation.
 - Jesus said, ***"I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood you have no life in you,"*** John 6:53. This caused His disciples to grumble because it was a "hard saying." Jesus explains, ***"The Spirit gives life, the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life,"*** verse 63. He moved from the physical to the spiritual and was not talking about drinking His physical blood. Here, "blood" and "body" represented His words.
- Jesus, speaking to the Samaritan woman said, ***"Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst,"*** John 4:13. She thought he was talking physically and meaning some kind

of water, but He was referring to the Holy Spirit. He moved from the physical to the spiritual.

- Jesus' disciples came to him after this event and said ***"Rabbi, eat something."*** He replied ***"I have food to eat, that you know nothing about."*** The disciples thought He was talking about literal food, saying, ***"Could someone have brought him food?"*** ***Jesus replied, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work,"*** John 4:31-34. He moved from the physical to the spiritual. "Food" here meant "work."

- The spiritual power of the blood of Jesus shed 2000 years ago cleanses us from sin. This is done in the mind of God and that is where we are saved, in His mind and we must believe that. But to mystically and physically transform and transport His blood to the baptistery is not only moving backwards from the spiritual to the physical but is spooky.

- To believe that His physical blood is present is to misunderstand metaphors:

- He said, "I am the door" but I know of no one who believes He is a door.
- He said, "I am the vine" but we know He was speaking figuratively.
- He said, "I am the tabernacle" but we understand this is a metaphor.
- When Jesus spoke of the "seed" in Matthew, we know that he was using the seed to illustrate the workings of the Word. Missing these kinds of things by applying physical interpretation is to miss the point just as the Pharisees, scribes, and teachers of law were guilty of.

- When Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper and said, ***"This is my blood,"*** as He held the fruit of the vine, He certainly didn't mean His actual blood for it had not been shed yet. In spite of this there are those who quote Him and (missing the metaphor) state that He said ***"this is"*** therefore it was His blood. What kind of exegesis is that?

- When the Bible speaks of the blood of Jesus Christ, it is referring to His death. As Vine points out that the word $\alpha\iota\mu\alpha$ (blood) means: (1) used in conjunction with flesh to refer to human life, Matt. 16:17; 1 Cor. 15:50; Gal. 1:16. (2) For human generations, John 1:13. (3) For bloodshed by violence, Matt. 23:35; Rev. 17:6. (4) For blood of sacrificial victims, Heb 9:7; of the blood of Christ, which betokens His death by the shedding of His blood in expiatory sacrifice; to drink His blood (which Jesus explained, see #7a above) is to **appropriate the saving effects of His expiatory death**, John 6:53.

- His blood was forfeited for our sins and "without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins," Hebrews 9:22. However, since:

- Animals were sacrificed once a year for atonement...not each month. Can it be that the blood of these animals had more efficacy (lasting a year for many) than the blood of our Savior (for just one sinner at a time).
(b) I choose to believe that the efficacy of the blood of Jesus can last into eternity.
- When the Bible speaks of the blood of Jesus it speaking of His death in payment for our sins, certainly nothing less than that, and we surely need nothing more.
- The question must be asked: Since He gave both His body and His blood do we need to “contact” His body in the baptistery as well? I think not.
- When we sing, “There is power in the blood,” “There is a Fountain Filled with Blood,” or “Nothing but the Blood,” we are singing in reference to His death, not eulogizing His blood.
 - The hymn book is not inspired by the Holy Spirit or these songs would be in the Bible.
- Hymns are written by men and women from various backgrounds and degrees of spirituality, as well as doctrinal standing...therefore I choose not to extract my theology from hymnbooks.

Having said all of that, I want to add that I love those who disagree with me and I believe they desire to lead souls to Christ by their teaching and preaching, just as I do. This is not to say I believe they are correct on this subject.

I simply desire to make my position very clear for fear of some may continue to say, as some already have, that I don't believe in the blood atonement of Jesus. I have explained my understanding of the that from the beginning of this paper.

I believe that God has a plan for salvation and I have and do use the expression “the plan of salvation,” (which is not in the Bible) when referring to that plan. But this is far different than teaching a physical transformation or transportation of Jesus' blood to the baptistery pools throughout the world.

The efficacy of the blood of Jesus shed 2000 years ago saves us, but I don't have to see the blood to believe it.

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