

## The Talking Blood (1994)

### Witness of Blood

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**I John 5:6** This is He who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth.

**I John 5:8-9** And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son.

Back in verse 6, the word ‘by’ is used: "this is who He came *by* water and blood." It can mean through (*dia*), by or through. It is pointing out that this is the means or the instrument by which He was accompanied when He did what He did.

The water here refers to His baptism and the beginning of His ministry through which He declared His purpose to fulfill our righteousness. Remember when He came to John the Baptist. John says, “I have need to be baptized of You,” and Jesus said, “Forbid Me not, for I am doing this to fulfill all righteousness.” So, He then proceeded to be baptized, and that is what is being referred to here. The blood refers to His violent and bloody death on the stake to pay for the sins of the world.

These two are pointed out here because they are significant occasions—one at the beginning of His ministry, setting the purpose, and the other at the end when He said, “It is finished.” He had accomplished what He set out to do.

A witness is one who is usually associated by us with a court of law or news items reported in a newspaper or perhaps on a television program. They are one who sees or hears an event and tells others of what they have seen or heard. They are one who has evidence because they have a personal and usually direct knowledge of something that has taken place and so they give

an attestation, evidence, or proof of the event or perhaps a whole series of events. They certify that something that they have witnessed is either true or false.

It says here that these three witnesses agree in one. It could be said that they converge upon one truth, for they all contribute to one and the same result, namely the truth that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh and that we have life because of Him. It is interesting that it is written in the Greek in such a way to give us understanding that they are constantly bearing witness, not just a one-time thing, but it is something that is with us constantly, a continuous ongoing process. For the purpose of this sermon, and because of the season, we are going to be concentrating on the blood here. The blood is a witness.

These verses say that the blood is a witness for God of Jesus Christ His Son. They say that blood has a testimony; that is, that the blood has a message. When the blood talks, what does it say? There used to be a saying in Britain that if you found a hemp rope that had a red center cord, you knew that the rope had been made by the British Navy because that was its trademark, an identifying sign that the navy had done the work.

There is a similarity here with the Bible, because anywhere that one looks in the Bible, you will find a red ribbon running through it—from Genesis through Revelation. Someone said that if you cut the Bible anywhere, it will bleed. It is a book, a living Book, that is filled with blood. There are an astounding 427 times in Scripture that we have reference to blood atonement that in some way, either directly or indirectly, it is saying that without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sins, there is no covering for sins.

We sometimes say that if God says something once, that ought to be enough for His sons. If He says something three times, that indicates finality and that is serious. If He says something seven times, that is perfection and that is super serious. But, brethren, 427 times (for you number buffs, that is  $7 \times 61$  exactly), He hammers into our consciousness the seriousness of sins and its consequence—death! Death is the only means by which sin can be covered, paid for, atoned for. Brethren, is God serious or what? Death is not something that we relish thinking of about, but we must.

**Hebrews 12:24** To Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.

The blood speaks. You might recall Genesis 4:10, where God told Cain that Abel's blood cried out from the ground for vengeance upon the murder of an innocent man. God said that because God would have been justified in taking vengeance, but this verse says that the blood of Jesus speaks out for something better, something better than for vengeance because God would be completely justified in taking our lives because of our murder of His innocent Son.

What does the blood say? For one thing, right within the pages of the book of Hebrews, it says that there is a better way than the shedding of the blood of bulls or goats to find atonement. In those 427 times, most of them are in the Old Testament where God was establishing the schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. The message is of the blood of Jesus Christ, which has been shed for the sins of the whole world, and that we must trust in His blood because it is His death that redeems us. His life as a man reveals His perfection, but His death pays the penalty, if we believe.

If we can, like Isaiah, look upon His sinless holiness as if looking in a mirror, we will see our sinfulness, and it brings us a deep conviction and humility about how far short we fall, that is fine. But it is faith in His death that brings deliverance from our bondage to sin and death.

**Isaiah 1:18** "Come now, and let us reason together," says the Lord, "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

This is something that I have not been able to prove myself, but I have been told if one takes a red filter and puts it over a red object, the red object will appear white. In like manner, when God applies the blood of Jesus Christ to our sins, the sins come out white because the death-dealing agent has been neutralized. The word the Bible uses to illustrate this is "atonement." It is a word that we usually associate with the Day of Atonement. The Passover and the Day of Atonement have much in common. The major difference only

being one of application: Atonement's focus is universal in scope whereas Passover's is deeply personal.

The English word "atone" literally means 'at one,' but it is used in the sense of to reconcile, expiate, make amends, to supply satisfaction for, to pay for, but the Hebrew word that it translates is *kaphar*. It has the primary meaning of 'to shelter,' or 'to put a covering over.' It is even translated in the Bible as "pitch," as in bitumen, as in asphalt, pitch, like you would put on a roof. It is also translated "purge" as in "cleanse, appease, pacify, reconcile, be merciful, forgive, pardon, or disannul."

You can see that the words do not mean exactly the same thing. I mean, the Hebrew *kaphar* and the English word "atone" do not mean specifically the same thing, but there is a relationship between the two. They do blend, but the Hebrew word focuses on the means or the action, whereas the English word focuses on the effect or what is accomplished.

**Genesis 6:14** Make yourself an ark of gopherwood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and outside with pitch.

The word 'cover' is *kaphar*. The word translated 'pitch' is *kopher*. The change of two letters there, two vowels. That second one is the derivative of the root *kaphar*. Noah covered the ark with pitch, the bottom of it, probably the sides as well, to keep the flood waters from where Noah and his family were. The Flood was God's judgment against the evil world, but Noah's family was safe because they were covered, they were sheltered. Do you get the sense of the word?

**Psalms 78:38** But He, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and did not destroy them. Yes, many a time He turned His anger away, and did not stir up all His wrath.

The word 'forgave' there is *kaphar*. He covered their iniquity. It was atoned for. They became, for however long it might have been, at one with Him. This is the word that is most frequently translated into the English word "atonement" and the overwhelming number of times appears in the book of Leviticus.

**Leviticus 1:4** Then he shall put his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him.

If you are at all familiar with the burnt offering which is being described here, you will understand that when one made a burnt offering, sin was not involved. The burnt offering was made to show one's dedication, one's devotion to God. So, "atonement," when it appears in the Bible, does not always have to do with sin. That is the case here. Sin is not involved when one makes the burnt offering. Rather atonement here is showing that God is satisfied because of the offerer's devotion as shown by the offering.

The priest is God's agent, or we might say, His intermediary, functioning in God's behalf. Leviticus 4:20, if we would through the whole chapter here, you would find at the beginning, it says the sin offering—here we are talking about sin; it is very definitely within the context here.

**Leviticus 4:20** And he shall do with the bull as he did with the bull as a sin offering; thus he shall do with it. So the priest shall make atonement for them, and it shall be forgiven them.

Here, sin is definitely in the picture and God is appeased as it were because of the offering. The sin is seemingly forgiven.

**Leviticus 17:11** For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.

Only blood can atone for sin. Make sure that you understand that. The righteousness of God will be satisfied only by death where sin is involved.

**Hebrews 9:22** And according to the law almost all things are purified [cleansed, covered] with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.

No forgiveness. Sin of course is what is implied there. This verse makes two things clear: There can be some form of atonement, in this case, cleansing by

means other than blood. There are four other methods that are shown in the Old Testament: some things are cleansed by water, some things are cleansed by fire, even some things are cleansed by incense, and in at least one case, something was cleansed by gold, but even as there are some things that can be cleansed by something other than blood, there is no forgiveness of sin without death.

Why does it have to be that way? Why did God set such a standard? Everything that He does is in love. Everything that He does is for our benefit. God created us. He understands human nature. He understands the way the human mind thinks and if he said that only through the shedding of blood there can be forgiveness, it has something to do with our nature and what it is going to take to impact upon our minds enough so that we will do something about sin.

There might be several reasons, but I am going to concentrate on one and that is: God knows that we tend to minimize the importance of *our* sins. As long as we can find security in what we consider to be our decency or respectability, we can find ways of assuaging or averting our guilt into something else. We try to forget it. But, you see, sin drugs us into suppressing the memory of it, but this is one of the most pernicious effects of sin. It lures us into concentrating on our good deeds that we have done. It is sort of like putting our sins in a box, burying them as it were inside there, and then sitting on the box for good measure to keep the sins on the inside.

It is not very long before we begin to find that the lid, like Pandora's box, is not airtight because the remembrance of them is in our mind and it comes back, sickening us psychologically with all varieties and degrees or intensities of mental illnesses. That is where mental illness comes from, and when we do remember them, again and again, we minimize their importance.

In fact, we give playful names to them. We call them by euphemisms—our "mistakes." We say to ourselves, and maybe to others, "I didn't mean any harm; it was all in fun. I was trying to have a good time." We laugh and say, "Well that's what makes me an interesting person to be with." We may insist to others and even to ourselves that what we do is our own business, as if we can ever contain the consequences of sin. Can the consequences of putting leavening in dough be contained, brethren? We fail to remember sometimes

that a little leaven leavens the whole lump, but in order to take the sting from our conscience, we obscure the importance of sin.

We do not really like to confront the moral purity of Jesus and if we are compelled to accept the seriousness of our evil, we will excuse ourselves by transferring the guilt, the blame to somebody else. "Oh! It was my mother's fault" or ". . . my father's fault; they abused me." Witness the Menendez brothers as a very vivid example. "The Devil made me do it; it was circumstances."

**Jeremiah 17:9** The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked [incurably ill]; who can know it?

The human heart is incredibly subtle when it tries to defend itself against an uneasy conscience, but the blood speaks. It is a constant rebuke to this tendency, to make light of our sins. An innocent victim had to be slain in order that *I* might be purified of my sins. God decided to do something that would shock us out of our insensitivity!

That is God's estimate of the seriousness of our sin. This is what sin really does. It does not merely kill; it crucified horribly God's own innocent Son. God makes it clear through the shedding of His Son's blood that forgiveness is not a casual matter with Him.

All too often, God is thought of as being an indulgent, easy-going parent who is more than ready to let bygones be bygones. He picks us up when we fall. He gives us a nice friendly pat on the back, tells us this will not count against us, and sends us away with a carefree heart. This is supposedly love. Wait a minute: Did you ever think of this scenario from God's point of view—that it might be His very love that makes forgiveness difficult for Him. Do we pain God's heart? Do we ever think about His feelings for His Son as the One who is put to death?

Suppose it was your child. Suppose a friend of yours was driving through your neighborhood with clearly marked signs saying, "children at play; speed limit 25 mph," because that is what the law of God does, it sets limits, it describes what is good. But this friend was carelessly zipping through at 55 miles an hour, his mind intent on what he wanted to do. Suddenly your

child darts out from between parked cars or from behind a bush, and your friend cannot stop. There is the squeal of rubber against the pavement and a sickening thud as he runs into your child and your child flies through the air, lands on the pavement, and slides along the ground, bleeding profusely all the over the place and unconscious. He is picked up, he is delivered to the hospital, and they find, yes, the child will live, but he is going to be crippled for the rest of life because, you see, sin, even if it does not kill outright, cripples us and others psychologically.

Then the friend discovers that the child was yours, and he comes to you seeking forgiveness. You may grant it, but believe me, it will not be easy. If it was casual, your forgiveness could mean your own child means little to you. An easy forgiveness would be no forgiveness at all for your friend. There has to be love strong enough, that yes, you would forgive, yet sound enough for your own child that you would find it very difficult to forgive.

**Matthew 26:27-28** Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”

Atonement through Christ’s blood indeed covers our sins. Yet at one and the same time, God’s justice must be satisfied and repentance occur in the sinner because God is not going to roll over and acquiesce to our request because He Himself has made a tremendous sacrifice to make that forgiveness possible and His feelings for His Son and that pain are awfully strong. The forgiveness is there but it is not all that easy.

**Acts 20:28** Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

When the blood talks, what does it says? Notice the association Paul makes that Jesus was God when He died for man’s sin and of course, He still is God and the church of God is His purchased possession. God purchased it at the price of His own life.



Maybe this is a rather crass analogy, but it is almost as if God walked up to the counter, He plunked down the blood, and was given a package of redemption in return and now He offers it to us freely, as this world's Christianity says. Is it? Not on your life. You know that because it takes your life now as you live it.

**Romans 3:23-25** For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed.

It is not exactly free, there is a cost to you and me. It is indeed generously given, God does not have to be forced. God is not stingy or reluctant in giving it, but only if we meet the conditions of faith and repentance. So this means then that there is no such thing in the Bible as the doctrine of the universal salvation—only those who believe, only those who repent, are going to be able to come under the blood. But that is far less of a cost than if we had to pay the price Christ paid because we too would have to die.

**Hebrews 9:27** And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.

It is not that kind of the death that is being talked about here because if we pay the wages of our sin rather than Christ then we die, but without hope. The judgment would already be made. There would be no "after the judgment."

He used the word "propitiation." The verb form of *propitiate* means "to gain the favor of." *Propitiation* is the noun form. The favor is gained. It means to conciliate, to reconcile. The noun form of the word has an interesting synonym. It can be used in its place. It can be known as the appeasing force, it is what satisfies, it is what appeases. Propitiation is that which causes God to deal with us mercifully. What is it that causes Him to deal mercifully with us? His blood, through faith.

**I John 2:2** And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the whole world.

He is the appeasing force. Here the 'He' is Jesus Christ. In Romans, it was His blood. You can see that they are being cross-referenced. They are being used synonymously because the blood was in the veins of God in the flesh, Jesus Christ.

It is the blood of God which speaks, which cries out. It is the blood of Jesus Christ which speaks, which cries out, the blood of sprinkling which cries out to God to give man mercy. It is the means of putting away sin and establishing righteousness.

Did you realize that man is never said to be able to appease God in any of his offerings? I am talking about appease here in the sense of forgiveness of sin.

Many have tried to do this. Many pagan religions are built around this theme—that the offerings that they made on their altar were done in an attempt to appease God. But that cannot be done with the offerings of man so that God will forgive sin.

Think of this in relation to the millions upon millions of animals that were slaughtered in Israel's history:

**Hebrews 10:3-4** But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.

The New Testament shows man incapable of offering anything to placate God because God is a righteous God. The blood of 10 million animals is not worth the life of one human being created in the image of God and it would not be right for God to accept such as an inadequate offering. God will not put you down by accepting the offering of an animal in your place. You are too precious for Him. You are too valuable. No animal, not even 10 million animals, can equal you.

The righteousness of God demands that there has to be something greater than you to cover your sins or you have to cover them yourself. For God to

accept sinful man, it was necessary for God Himself, not man, to do something to deliver us from our sins.

It was Christ Himself who became the offering and was able to satisfy God's righteousness or God's sense of justice because as we can see that this is an offering of such magnitude that it pays not just for one person's sins, but *for the sins of all for all time*, but brethren, it is even more than that.

**I John 1:6-7** If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

The place of expiation is the crucifixion. The means of expiation is His life, or we might say His blood or His death, but we have to say blood because of the context and because the Bible so frequently shows that forgiveness only comes through the shedding of blood. The virtue of propitiation extends beyond merely being a private experience for those of us who are partakers of something that happened in a specific time and place. I am talking about Christ's death, 1900 and some years ago.

**I John 2:2** And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the whole world.

**I John 1:7** But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

I John 2 shows that His death is involved, but I John 1:7 shows that His life is also involved in our forgiveness because verse 7 can be translated "His blood *is*"—present tense—"cleansing us." Chapter 2 verse 2 is showing us an atonement as a completed act, a statement of fact, verse 7 of chapter 1 is showing us a process. The propitiation, the appeasing force, abides in us as a living and dynamic Personality.

John then sees propitiation as the cleansing from sin, a process, not merely a past work of justification or reconciliation that gets us accepted in God's

presence. This is a very significant insight. It is interesting to note the difference between Paul and John and their approach to this subject of propitiation. Both of them are correct. Each only has different perspectives.

In Paul's writings, the propitiation, the appeasing force, is closely connected to the righteousness of the law. In other words, Paul looks on it as a legal act and that fits fine into the context in which he is writing. John though sees it in association with love. Love is an ongoing action. So much so does John see it this way that the two words, love and propitiation, become interchangeable realities necessary to one another with each one explaining the other.

**I John 3:16** By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. [There is the example, the prime example in all of life, of love. You can understand then that love is sacrificial, in essence, at its heart in core; it lays down its life.] And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

**I John 4:10-11** In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. [Here is the demonstration of love, becoming the propitiation, the appeasing force.] Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

In the book of I John, love and propitiation are interchangeable. If you think the only thing that matters in your relationship with God is that He is the only one that you have to answer to, I do not believe you have even gotten to first base in understanding what love is, what the appeasing force is.

Therefore, how can we be able to be formed into His image if we do not understand what we are to become? We are to become an appeasing force ourselves. We are to become, as it were, a propitiation. Our propitiations, our appeasing force, will not forgive sin; there is only the shedding of only the One that forgives sins, but that One is now in us as a living dynamic Personality. When John speaks of God as being love, he means that He is the means of reconciliation.

**II Corinthians 5:18** Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation.

This is our ministry, but I think that one of the major things we have a tendency to forget or to overlook is that the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace, by those who are appeasing forces. I do not think that we realize how much of our relationship with God hinges on how we treat our brother.

I will give you one quick look that you will be able to see vividly. What happened when Cain's relationship with his brother was broken down by what Cain did in his sin? What happened to Cain? He was separated. That little vignette is there at the beginning of the Book to show us what happens—how important our relationship with our brother is.

**I John 4:20-21** If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother.

Do not let anyone tell you that "it is just between me and God," as though nothing else matters as far as our judgment is concerned, because it is our relationship with our brothers that is the primary area of our judgment because that is the environment in which we live and operate.

If we want to be in a good relationship with God, truly reconciled to Him, it will be because the blood has paved the way toward how we treat our brother. Does the parable in Matthew 25 teach you anything? Christ said, "Because you have done this to the least of these My brothers, you have done it unto Me" (Matthew 25:40). Christ cannot be separated from His brothers. If we have a good relationship with God it is because we are using His Spirit to be an appeasing force, a force for the covering of sin because is it not John who says that love covers a multitude of sins? Brethren, we have just begun to scratch the surface of this subject.

But when the blood speaks, what does it say? It says, "Without My testimony before God, there is no appeasing God's righteousness and holy justice. There is no covering for your sins. There is no reconciliation with God. There is no redemption." That is pretty important testimony.

"Without My testimony, there is no justification, and therefore, there is no receiving of God's Spirit." There is no further cleansing unto sanctification, no reconciliation with my brothers whom I have involved in my sins and therefore, there is no hope.

Is it any wonder then that someone would say that no matter where you cut the Bible, it bleeds? Is it any wonder then that blood appears an incredible 427 times as either the direct or indirect means of our salvation? It is something serious to think about as we take this Passover.