

98-08-28b Colossians

We're back now from our break looking at the concept of the blood of Christ in the New Testament Scriptures in particular. There's actually much more detailed information about the work of Christ in both its heavenward and earthward aspects in the Old Testament. We will save that examination for a study of the Levitical offerings that I hope we get to do in the not too distant future.

As it is now, we have already seen that the blood of Christ, according to Scripture, propitiates God on our behalf. That was Romans 3.25 and Matthew 26.28. It unites us to Christ. We are partakers of his blood when we partake of the cup.

Symbolically, we are united with Christ and it is a fellowship in 1 Corinthians 10. Of course, in being united to Christ, we are also united to one another, which is the major idea in that passage. We are brought nigh to God in Ephesians 2.13. The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses us from all sin.

1 John 1.7, Revelation 1.5 and Hebrews 9.22. Which reminds us that according to the law, almost all things are purified with blood. Without shedding of blood, there is no remission. This Hebrews passage in Hebrews 9 and 10 is quite significant as far as the blood of Christ is concerned.

One of the major points about the blood of Christ is that it redeemed us. We have been redeemed with the blood of Christ. This is another verse that many of us have memorized.

1 Peter 1.18 and 19 is the prominent passage in this regard. Peter says in verse 17 of 1 Peter 1, If you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear, knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things like silver or gold from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but, and you can fill in, you were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. So, redemption here is explicitly said to be through the blood of Christ.

It doesn't say that we were redeemed through the body of Christ, does it? Revelation 5.9 makes a similar statement in a more universal type of language. When he had taken the scroll in Revelation 5.8, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the lamb, each having a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying, You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain and have redeemed us to God by your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God, and we shall reign on the earth.

This is one of the major clues, by the way, in the study of Revelation to the identity of the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders. There are some who say that the four living creatures are angelic in nature, but they are said to sing this song, You have redeemed us by your blood

out of every tribe, tongue, people and nation. This speaks of the human race.

So the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders are, evidently from this passage, all human beings. To have been made kings and priests and to reign on the earth also suggests to us that they may be church-age believers. That language is associated with the church, but that's not the main focus of our study.

What we're looking at here is that the song they sing indicates that he has redeemed us to God by your blood. Even though redemption is sin-ward in its effects, redemption, of course, is toward God. If you think about this, everything that we've seen about the blood of Christ has as its emphasis God's view.

Redemption is accomplished in God's mind. Propitiation is accomplished in the God-ward direction. We are made near to God, brought nigh to God by the blood of Christ.

The blood of Christ cleanses our sins. This is in God's sight, in the same way that the sprinkling of blood on the sacrifices in the Old Testament was a picture of sanctification and cleanliness. You have that same idea here.

The blood of Christ redeems us. Purchasing us is another idea there. 1 Peter 1, 18-19, Revelation 5-9, Acts 20-28.

It's another passage in this regard. Acts 20-28 says, Therefore take heed to yourselves, this is Paul talking to the Ephesian pastors, 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. It is the church of God purchased with his own blood.

It belongs to Jesus Christ through redemption. It was a gift. The church is a gift from God to Christ.

You get that from reading John 15-17 along in there. All that the Father has given me will come to me and so forth. We are a special gift from the Father to Christ.

And we were purchased or redeemed in that regard. Acts 20-28. You also have this idea in 1 Corinthians 6-19-20 where once again in the letter to the Corinthians Paul says, Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price.

Therefore, glorify God in your body. If you have a King James or New King James, the remaining part of verse 20 is really not there. And in your spirit which are God's is somebody's marginal note that got absorbed into the text.

You are not your own. You were bought with a price. Therefore, glorify God in your body.

That is a Godward view. Because you've been purchased by God, we owe allegiance to him. We owe our very selves to him.

We should glorify God in our body because we belong to him. We've been purchased by him. In 1 Corinthians 7-23, similar idea.

Talking about slaves and freedmen. You were bought at a price. Do not become slaves of men.

No earthly man purchased us. And even though he's talking to let each one remain in whatever calling that he is in, he may be talking to a slave here. If you were called as a slave, then remain a slave.

Do not be concerned about it. You were bought at a price. And he says it doesn't matter what your earthly status is.

You've been purchased with the precious blood of Christ. So don't become a slave to men. Application of the idea there.

And then in Ephesians 1-7, we once again are reminded that we have been purchased. When Paul says, In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. Redemption doesn't say we have redemption through his body, does it? We have redemption through his blood because that's a Godward aspect of Christ's work.

Now the blood of Christ, because it does these things, because it draws us near to God, because it cleanses us from our sins, because it accomplishes propitiation and accomplishes redemption. The effect, as far as we are concerned of that, is it, for one thing, cleanses our conscience. If you go to Hebrews 10-22, this is where the author encourages us to approach God.

Let us draw near, knowing that we have this new and living way through the veil. He says, Therefore, brethren, in Hebrews 10-19, having boldness to enter the holiest by the blood of Jesus. What does the blood of Jesus do for us? It gives us confidence to enter the presence of God.

Why? Because the blood of Jesus Christ has satisfied the Father. There's no issue hanging over our head. There's no breach of relationship in the sense of the unsaved individual trying to come before God.

We are made righteousness and peace and sanctification in Christ. And so we have boldness because of the blood of Christ. What does that mean? We have boldness to come before God because we know that the work of Christ has satisfied God the Father.

There's no need for us to hesitate. There's no need for us to be reluctant or to have some sort of shame or embarrassment or other delay in coming before God. It doesn't depend on us.

It depends on the finished work of Christ. And as believers, we have boldness to enter the holiest, the place that even the priests would not dare to enter in the Old Testament. We have boldness to enter.

It's because of the blood of Christ. By a new and living way, which he consecrated for us through the veil, that is his flesh, and having a high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith. Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience.

What is the substance that is sprinkled on our conscience? Whenever you have this term sprinkling, this is not like sprinkling your ironing to get the wrinkles out. When I was little, I didn't have steam irons, or at least if they had them, ours didn't work. So my mom had a Coke bottle with a cork in the top and a little spritzer deal and when she wanted to knock wrinkles out, she would sprinkle water on the clothes and then Well, this is not sprinkling with water.

People didn't sprinkle with water. We wash with water to get something clean. But in the spiritual sense, if you sprinkle it with blood, it is sanctified.

That's what the whole book of Hebrews is about. The contrast and the building and the moving forward from the shadows and the illustrations and the law to the reality in Christ. Our hearts having been sprinkled from an evil conscience.

This is a very powerful statement. Our hearts having been sprinkled from an evil conscience. What is an evil conscience? Whatever it is, it is remedied by the blood of Christ.

If your conscience is afflicting you, if your conscience, when you come before God, if you have a sense of unworthiness that's out of proportion, I mean obviously we recognize that we're unworthy, we're all unworthy, and what we have to remember is we're not coming to God on the basis of our worthiness or lack thereof. We approach God on the basis of the worthiness of Christ, who is absolutely worthy. Worthy is the lamb that was slain, is the song they sing in heaven.

Therefore, we have boldness to enter. If you tie verse 19 and verse 22 together, we have boldness to enter the presence of God by the blood of Jesus Christ. The knowledge of the effectiveness and the sufficiency of the work of Christ on our behalf gives us boldness to enter and it cleanses our conscience.

We don't have an afflicted conscience. We don't have a conscience that is remembering and gnawing over our evil like an old bone. And the knowledge of what the work of Christ means and what its purpose is cleanses our conscience.

We don't sit and dwell and meditate and hesitate to come before God and come before God cowering with a sense of our guilt and shame and sinfulness and depravity and so forth. Jesus Christ went through a lot on the cross to make sure we didn't do that. We're not supposed to do

that.

That was the job of the believers in the last dispensation. We as a human race have been through that already. Now our calling is to claim the effective, sufficient, all-encompassing work of Christ and to come before God in faith resting on the work of Christ, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy.

He washes us. He renews us. And that is based on the blood of Christ and we have confidence and boldness.

Now that is not to say that there are not experiential issues, that when we fail we need to come before God and be cleansed and set it right. It is not to say that there is not judgment or that there is not discernment of problems. We're looking at things from the standpoint between us and God because the blood of Christ focuses on the Godward side.

What does God see when we come before him? He sees the complete righteousness, the complete satisfaction of his essence in Christ. So that's what this is talking about. We have boldness and we are encouraged to draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

So this indicates that not only are we aware of and claiming the work of Christ on our behalf, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin, but we also have made it our goal to walk in the light. Our practice, our human life, referenced here by the phrase, our bodies, this is our earthly operation. This is our earthly tent and the way we function.

We cleanse that. We don't just say, well, I committed this same old sin that I've committed a hundred thousand times before and I don't really have any intention of changing. I just know that I can cite it and I'll be forgiven.

The balancing feature is not only do we name our sin and receive cleansing from God, but we walk in the light. We have our bodies washed with pure waters. We cleanse ourselves from the defilement that caused us to have to claim the blood of Christ in the first place.

So this is not a consciousness or a get out of jail free card for sin. It's like Paul says in Romans, if we've died to sin, why should we any longer live in it? It should be our fervent desire and goal to not fail and to not give in to sin and to not live apart from fruitfulness and so forth. So there's a balancing feature there.

But the blood of Christ cleanses our conscience. And that again is an operation that occurs through faith. The blood of Christ justifies us, Romans 5.9. What is justification? What did we talk about last hour? If you see the term justify or justification in scripture, what does it mean? Righteousness by faith.

The theme of the book of Romans. Read any commentary, what's the theme of Romans?

Justification by faith. The problem is, what do we mean by justification? A great portion of the world thinks that this is justification at the point of salvation.

We have seen in detail that this is living faith. Look at the example of Abraham in Romans 4. If you don't remember anything else from the book of Romans, remember chapter 4. Paul puts as the centerpiece, an illustration of his entire argument, Abraham. Abraham believed God.

It was credited to him for righteousness. Is Paul in Romans 4 talking about Abraham's salvation? No, he is not. Is Paul in the book of Romans talking about salvation from the lake of fire? No, he is not.

He says over and over and over again, this is life for believers. This is the gospel of Christ that is the power of God for deliverance to those who are trusting. Not to those who will trust.

To those who are trusting. To those who believe. To those who are believers.

Such a shame that we missed the point of Romans. But here, he says in Romans chapter 5 and verse 9. He says in verse 8, God demonstrated his own love toward us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more than having now been justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

If you try to take this as salvation, this verse makes no sense. Now, having been justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. People say, well, we shall be saved from the lake of fire through him because we have been justified in salvation.

What this is talking about is operationally, if we are walking by faith and receiving justification. Receiving the declaration of righteousness that Abraham received in the previous chapter of this book. Abraham believed the promise of God about his son and he was justified.

He was declared righteous. If we have been justified by faith, if we have adopted that as our mode of operation. If we are walking by faith and God has declared us righteous like he did Abraham because we trust him.

Guess what? We are delivered from wrath. There is no judgment in the daily sense, the discipline that God gives to his children. Whom the Lord loves, he rebukes and he chastens us.

He chastens every son. When we err, when we fall short, when we are not doing the right thing, there is going to be the discipline from God. There is going to be wrath.

There will be wrath now, there will be wrath at the judgment seat. Wrath on believers who have ignored the plan of God. But if you are justified by faith because we as believers have awakened to what the call and purpose of God is.

And we are attempting to live that way and we are trusting God. We know his word and we

believe it. We are delivered from wrath.

There is not going to be. It is like it says, if we would judge ourselves we would not be judged. We judge ourselves, we acknowledge our transgressions, claim the blood of Christ and this applies to us.

So having been justified by his blood, we have been declared righteous. What is the basis for us being able to be declared righteous? It is redemption through his blood as we saw earlier. So that is another blood of Christ passage in Romans 5.9. And we have also seen that the blood of Christ sanctifies us.

This is back in Hebrews 10.29. He is talking about people who sin willfully after they have received the knowledge of the truth. And people like to say, oh this is unbelievers. They received the knowledge of the truth.

Somebody gave them the gospel but they did not receive it. Of course the problem is he does not say if they sin willfully after they receive the knowledge of the truth, does he? This is chapter 10 of Hebrews. He spent nine and a half chapters talking to these Jewish Christians.

Now in chapter 10, he is not talking about preaching the gospel to the unsaved, is he? He is talking about let us consider one another to stir each other up to love and good works. Let us not forsake the assembling of ourselves together. He is talking to believers about functioning as believers in 10.24 and 25, isn't he? And then he says, you want to not forsake the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of some is, but exhort one another so much more as you see the day approaching, because, and the first word in verse 26 is because, for.

The reason we want to do these things in verse 24 and verse 25 is, if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth. There is no legitimate way you can take verse 26 and say it is talking about unbelievers, unless you also believe that unbelievers consider one another to stir up love and good works, and that unbelievers should not forsake the assembling of themselves together so much the more as they see the day approaching. It is the same we in verse 26 that you have people in verse 24 and 25.

If we believers who are trying not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, who ought to be stirring one another up to love and good works. If we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, if we don't do these things mentioned in verses 19 through 25, that is willfully sinning, because the author has told them, this is what we ought to be doing, this is the call, the life of fruitfulness, the life of opportunity that Christ died to give us. And if we ignore that, if we sin willfully after we have received this truth, there remains no longer a sacrifice for sins.

It is not like you can get over this by offering a sacrifice. The sacrifice has already been made. And the opportunity to abandon sin and live in the call and the grace of God has already been made.

And if you reject that, if you sin willfully against that opportunity, if you despise the blood of the covenant by which you are sanctified, and you set that aside, that is the only sacrifice there is. There is only one sacrifice in this life that does it all. The blood of Jesus Christ propitiates, it redeems, it reconciles, it is the basis of our being declared righteous, it is the basis of our being brought near to God, it is the basis of our entire standing before God, to come before Him boldly, to have our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience.

Everything depends on that one single sacrifice. And if you sin willfully by ignoring that opportunity, there is no other sacrifice. It is not like, well, if you don't like that one, here is another one over here.

There is no more sacrifice for sin, that is it. And you sin willfully against it. So he says, if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins.

But a certain fearful expectation of judgment and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. These are the people that Paul said, I tell you, even weeping, they are enemies of the cross. Why is he weeping? Because they are believers.

If anybody ought to not be an enemy of the cross, it is somebody that has been redeemed and bought with a price, resting on the blood of Christ for their standing before God. But with all of that, if we sin willfully by ignoring that knowledge, we can become an enemy of the cross. Go to Galatians.

If you depend on these other things and you ignore the opportunity that Christ has created for us through His work on the cross, you have fallen from grace, you are cut off from Christ, you are an enemy of the cross, he uses lots of language to describe it. And here he says, you have a fearful expectation of judgment and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.

By the way, in verse 28, he is going back as he does throughout Hebrews to compare to the Old Testament, doesn't he? Who was under the law of Moses in the Old Testament? Believers or unbelievers? Believers. They didn't go out and grab a Hittite and stone him to death because he broke the law of Moses, did they? They didn't go out and grab a Syrian or an Archite or a Hivite or a Girgashite and say, you broke the seventh commandment here, we're going to stone you. The law was for the people of God.

It was a covenant relationship between the nation of Israel who is supposed to be believers. It's the law for believers. Why is he using the law as an illustration here? He doesn't say the godless pagan sinners of Sodom and Gomorrah were judged by God with fire and brimstone when they rejected the truth.

He says if believers under the law rejected Moses' law, they died without mercy on the testimony

of two or three witnesses. You could be a God-fearing believer, but if you broke the law of Moses and two or three people testified against you, you could be stoned to death. Of how much worse punishment do you suppose will he be fought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot? I can't even dare to picture this in my mind.

You think about Jesus Christ in his glory. You look at John in Revelation chapter 1, seeing him with the flaming fire and the burnished bronze and all of that. And then you try to picture somebody trampling the Son of God underfoot.

It's unthinkable. How much worse punishment do you suppose will he be fought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, who has counted the blood of the covenant by which he was set apart? This person who's trampling the Son of God was set apart by that very blood of Christ. This is a believer.

I do not comprehend how somebody can come to this passage and twist it around and say that it doesn't apply to believers. But that's the common interpretation of this passage is that it does not refer to believers. People can't believe that this could apply to a believer, as they do much of Romans.

Counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, a common thing. This is an impure thing, a mundane thing, a worthless thing, something to be cast aside. And has insulted the spirit of grace because the spirit is a gift to every believer and he remains with us and seals us unto the day of redemption and he takes the word of God and presents us with the option.

And to sin against that knowledge is an insult to the spirit of grace. You're saying, I know you've come and I know you're giving me all this truth and I just don't care. I'm not interested in the opportunity that Jesus Christ died to give me, and so forth.

So, but one of the things that we find sort of on the flip side of this coin here in verse 29 is that it says that this reprobate believer counts the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified. What does that tell us? The blood of Jesus Christ, the blood of the covenant. Remember in the upper room, this cup is the new covenant in my blood.

What does that do? He says the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified. We are set apart by the blood of Christ. We are set apart in this age.

We are set apart for a special purpose. You are not your own, for you are bought with a price. We stand out from the rest of the human race.

We even stand out from the rest of believers in other dispensations because we are uniquely purchased as the bride of Christ. And this particular covenant is our covenant. This blood of the covenant in that cup in the upper room, that's the new covenant.

That's not the old covenant. That's church age believers. And to trample that underfoot, to treat it

as a common thing and insult the spirit of grace, look at verse 31.

It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. And I don't care if you're a believer or an unbeliever. If you disregard the plan of God, it's the most arrogant thing anybody can do.

And it is especially heinous to do so as a believer purchased with the blood of Jesus Christ. And it will be a fearful thing. So what does he say? What's his application of this in verse 32? Recall the former days in which after you were eliminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings.

He says, don't let this happen to you, believers. So that's another thing that the blood of Jesus Christ does. It sanctifies us, sets us apart.

The blood of Jesus Christ enables victory over Satan. There's a big segment of Christianity that's all wrapped around the axle on Satan and the demons and so forth. Victory over Satan is just as certain as every other part of our salvation.

Look at Revelation chapter 12 verse 11. This, by the way, is a very fascinating passage in another respect. We've been wondering a little bit in Colossians about the fact that Christ has reconciled everything.

God through Christ has reconciled everything, whether it's in heaven or in earth. Remember that? You were wondering, well, if Jesus died on the cross, how does that reconcile the angels in heaven? Well, watch for that when we go to Revelation chapter 12 and look at verse 10 of Revelation 12. Actually, go all the way back up to earlier in the chapter.

You remember the first five or six verses there talk about the sign in heaven. There's a woman clothed. She has a child, and the dragon is chasing her.

And his tail draws a third of the stars of heaven and throws them down to earth in verse 4. The dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her child as soon as it was born. Of course, the woman representing Israel, the child representing Christ, the dragon representing Satan. The stars that are drawn down by his tail are the third part of the angels in heaven that followed Satan in his rebellion.

She bore the male child who was to rule all the nations with a rod of iron. It's not hard to figure out who that is in verse 5. And her child was caught up to God and his throne, which sort of brings us up to date. That's where he is now.

Verse 6. The woman fled into the wilderness where she has a place prepared by God that they should feed her there 1,260 days. We're now in the 70th week of Daniel, and that's half. That's three and a half years if you figure out the days.

Then in verse 7, what happens? War broke out in heaven. Who's fighting this war? Michael and his angels fought with the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought. These are the stars

brought down by the tail.

So you've got Michael, who is the prince of Israel, the national angel for Israel and so forth. He's associated with the nation. Michael and his angels fight with Satan and his angels.

The dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world. He was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

This is very interesting. When does the casting out from heaven take place? Is this retrospective or is it concurrent during the tribulation? Is he cast out halfway through? Well, look what it says in verse 10. Then, at the point that he's cast out, at the point that he and his angels are cast to the earth, then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now salvation and strength and the kingdom of our God and the power of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.

Well, he had to have been cast down after he was up there accusing human beings, right? So this fall did not take place before the human race came on the scene, or who would he have been accusing? This voice speaks and says, The accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. And they overcame him, in verse 11, how? How did Michael and his angels overcome Satan and his angels? Because that's who fought the war, right? How was he overcome? By the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony. And they did not love their lives to the death.

Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea. For the devil has come down to you having great wrath because he knows that he has a short time.

So the heavens rejoice because Satan and his angels are gone. The earth and the sea get depressed because now he's down there and he's very angry and he knows his time is short. But the fascinating section of this is that the victory that is won over them, the reason they are cast out of heaven, is based on the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony.

What is the basis of the rejection of Satan and his angels and whatever appeal they have before God of their sentence to the lake of fire, which we know antedates human history, came before human history? He was already in trouble with God before we ever came on the scene. But he's up there and he apparently made some kind of appeal and so God has tolerated him all this time. But now, basically, his appeal has been thrown out at this point.

And what is that based on? Why does... If you ever watched back in the old days when they had the people's court, Judge Wapner and they had Rusty de Bailiff, and every once in a while the little defendant and so forth would be in there and they'd get unruly. I mean, it's a TV court. I don't

know why they thought they had to get all upset, but they'd lose their control.

And so Judge Wapner would tell Rusty de Bailiff, grab him and escort him out. Just take him out of my courtroom. Well, that's what Michael and his angels are doing with Satan and the angels that rebel with him.

This war breaks out in heaven and they're rebelling. They're not wanting to go. But Satan and his angels kick them out.

What is the basis for them being kicked out? It tells us in verse 11, They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony. It is the testimony of faith in the human race. It is righteousness by faith.

Everything that we achieve, the fruit that we bear in our lives, as believers, based on the blood of Christ. It is the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony that the word of God is true and that the plan of God prevails and that righteousness does come through faith. And we can be transformed by the renewing of our minds.

And we can die to sin and live to God. We can yield our members as instruments to righteousness. We can be in the world and yet not be of the world.

It's the word of their testimony and the blood of the Lamb. That defeats Satan. That is the basis for him getting kicked out of heaven.

And Michael, the archangel and his angels run him out of town. And there is rejoicing in heaven and there is grief on earth because his time is short. And then you go on and you'll notice also that you have this interleaving of the woman that represents Israel who gives birth to the child.

Because then in verse 13, when the dragon saw that he had been cast to earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child. He's persecuting the woman who has already given birth to the child. So this is after Christ has come.

These events take place. So that's a clue to placing it. But again, we're not studying Revelation.

But the essential principle there is the blood of Christ enables victory over Satan. It accomplishes God's purpose of silencing and evicting Satan and his angels. It's based on the blood of the Lamb.

God says, your case has no merit. Here's the blood of the Lamb. Here's the word of their testimony.

Out you go. Michael, escort Satan and his angels out. And of course they resist and there's this war in heaven.

But they do not prevail and they're cast out. Finally, look at John chapter 6. This is where Jesus

speaks those difficult words. He violates all of the conventional wisdom.

If you want to build a movement, if you want to gain a following, you don't turn them on. We have leadership by opinion poll today. People in high places who want to take a course of action, they get a focus group and they take opinion polls and they try out different things to see how people are going to react.

They give three or four different versions of the speech and see which one people like the best and that's the one they give. It has no bearing to the truth or anything else. Obviously, Jesus didn't do that.

When you look at John, he says in chapter 6 verse 51 of the Gospel of John, I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I shall give is my flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.

Notice he doesn't say my blood which I will shed for the life of the world. He says my flesh. And next week we'll take a look in detail at the body of Christ, this idea of his physical partaking of humanity.

But then the Jews quarreled among themselves saying how can this man give us his flesh to eat? As always, their flaw was taking everything so literally and not seeing the spiritual truth behind it. That was their problem with the whole Mosaic law. So then Jesus answered them, most assuredly in verse 53, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.

Now, where is the life of the flesh, according to scripture? In the blood. So these Pharisees that he's talking to, they have flesh and blood. But Jesus says even though you've got flesh and blood, you have no life in you unless you partake of my flesh and my blood.

What's he saying? The very same thing we've seen elsewhere, in particular in reference to the blood. Remember the koinonia, the fellowship of the cup? Over in Corinthians, that cup is a fellowship in his blood. We partake in the spiritual sense of the blood of Christ.

And that's why we have life in us. Our spiritual life, our standing before God, our eternal life and eternal future is based on the work of Christ that satisfied God. And unless we partake of that, we have no life in us.

This physical life is nothing compared to eternity. And without the life of Christ that was secured for us both through his flesh and through his blood on the cross, we have no life in us. He says in verse 55, My flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.

He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me and I in him. And this isn't ongoing. These are all in the present tense.

He doesn't say he who has eaten and he who has drunk in the sense of salvation, does he? He says he who eats, he who drinks, abides, and I abide. These are all present tense because this is an ongoing opportunity for believers. And he goes on to explain this to his disciples later in the chapter.

You have the spiritual side of things reflected in the blood, the relationship with God. You have the earthly side of things reflected in the body or in the flesh. And he says that explicitly in verse 63.

It is the spirit who gives life. The flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit and life.

How do you partake in a present tense sense of the blood of Christ? It's through the word and the spirit. How do you eat his flesh and drink his blood? It's not participating in the communion ritual. If you say, Okay, I don't want to make the mistake the Pharisees made.

I do want to essentially eat his flesh and drink his blood. It sounds terrible, but what does that really mean? Jesus gives the key here. The words that I speak to you are spirit and they are life.

But there are some of you who do not trust. There are some of you who do not believe. Without faith, through the word and through the spirit, you're not going to partake.

You're not going to enjoy that fellowship. So, that's our final point on the blood of Christ. It emphasizes the God-word aspect of Christ's work on our behalf.

The satisfaction of God, approach to God, being brought near to God, being qualified to stand in his presence. So, when we encounter passages that deal with the blood of Christ, this is what is being spoken of. When we come back next week, we want to look at the body of Christ.

I can tell you just very quickly, if you turn to 1 Corinthians 10, where we saw the communion table aspect at the beginning of our study this evening. He said that you are not discerning the Lord's body if you eat and drink in an unworthy manner. He says you're rushing to the table, you're elbowing other people out of the way, you're shaming them, you're dishonoring them.

You are not discerning the Lord's body. He's talking here not about the body of Christ in the sense of what aspect of Christ's work. He's talking about the body of Christ in the sense of believers.

You are the body of Christ as a group. When we look at our participation with Christ in his blood, we're looking at our connection to God because that's the heavenward side of things. When we look at our participation with Christ through his body, we're looking at the earthly side of things.

And that is our connection with each other. And that's why the church is not called the blood of Christ on earth. The church is called the body of Christ on earth.

The body is the earthly side. And we are now the earthly side of Christ's presence here on earth. And we are members of one another.

And so to sin against a fellow believer is to sin against the body of Christ. You're not discerning the Lord's body. And that's what Paul is talking about in 1 Corinthians chapter 10.

Turn over just a few pages in Corinthians to 1 Corinthians chapter 12. He picks up this thread of argument again in chapter 12, talking about spiritual gifts. In the first 11 verses there, he talks about different people have been given different manifestations of the Spirit.

There are diversities of gifts. What is the purpose of spiritual gifts? He sums it up in one sentence, one phrase. What is the purpose of spiritual gifts? It's to edify the body of Christ.

That's the purpose. You can make a case for evangelism, but even there, that's adding to the body of Christ. Spiritual gifts edify the body.

If you have a spiritual gift and you think it's tongues, and you blather on in some unintelligible sounds, unless you can figure out that that's edifying somebody, you're not exercising a spiritual gift because spiritual gifts build up and are a blessing to and a productive influence on the body of Christ. So then in verse 12 he says, For as the body is one and has many members, all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. Verse 13 of 1 Corinthians 12, By one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.

See, he's tying in, how do you drink into one Spirit? This is the body and blood of the Lord. This is referring back to the communion table. What is the result of being united to Christ through His blood? We are inevitably united to one another.

Because if I'm one with Christ and somebody else is one with Christ, it's one of those geometric proof things. If A equals B and B equals C, then A equals C. If I'm joined to Christ and you're joined to Christ, then we are in some sense joined to one another. That's the point here.

We've all been made to drink into one Spirit. For in fact, the body is not one member, but many. You go on with the hand and the foot and the eye saying, I have no need of one another.

In verse 18, God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. If they were all one member, you wouldn't have a functioning body. You'd have one big elbow there instead of a body with all of the component parts.

Now indeed, there are many members, yet one body. What is the purpose? Look at verse 25. This summarizes everything he's been talking about in the last couple of chapters, which encompasses the Lord's table section in chapter 10.

There should be no schism in the body. The members should have the same care one for

another. That's the goal.

Now there should be no schism in a marriage either, right? The goal of God, and the design of God, is that for this reason, a man leaves father and mother, cleaves to his wife, and they two are one flesh. However, there are conditions where that is impossible, and God has made provision for a dissolving marriage. There are also times when there will be a schism in the body.

It's necessary, because some part of the body has become cancerous, or some part of the body has made itself non-functional through unbelief and hardness of heart, like we saw over in Hebrews 10. The goal, though, is that there should be no schism in the body. This is the ideal, just like there's an ideal for marriage.

It is only in extremis that we are forced to have a schism in the body. You are all the body of Christ and members individually of it. Once again, you can see that when you start talking about body of Christ, now we're talking about function on the earth, the earthly side of the equation.

Scripture doesn't speak of the body of Christ or the broken flesh of Christ propitiating God or accomplishing redemption. This is all the man-word emphasis. We'll pick that up and conclude in short order that study next week, and then we'll go on to see how this will give us insight to what we're seeing in Colossians chapter 1.