

# Truth for Today

*The Bible Explained*

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## Things which accompany salvation: Blood and Water

### Introduction

Today, we will consider two verses of scripture which must be related.

The first is John 19:34, which refers to **“blood and water”**: *“... one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.”*

The second is 1 John 5:6, which refers to **“water and blood”**: *“This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood.”*

I am convinced that a true understanding of John 19:34 depends on an understanding and application of the literal and chronological use there of the words “blood” and “water”. They are used in the Gospel to demonstrate and emphasise the significance of the fact that Jesus our Lord did really sacrifice, offer up to God, His life upon earth. When the time was right, He did actually die. Likewise, I am equally convinced that a true understanding of 1 John 5:6 depends on a spiritual and moral understanding of the symbolic, metaphorical use of the words “water” and “blood” in that verse, and in its immediate background and context! We shall consider that later.

### John 19:34 “Blood and water”

The Gospel according to John emphasises again and again the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Against that background, this Gospel also emphasises that He came into the world for the specific purpose of dying for our sins. To be able to do so, it was necessary for Him to become a real man, without ceasing to be God. Only then would it be possible for Him to pass through death. At the end of the Gospel, the text confirms, in John 19:34-35, the fact that He did indeed actually die.

### Personal testimony

You know, I shall be eternally thankful that in the grace of God I became friendly with a very special Christian family who were farmers. I learned things from them that I might well not have learned from anyone else.

On one of my many visits to their farm, I found myself enjoying a cup of tea in the farm kitchen with the farmer’s wife. Among other things, she told me about her early days as a farmer’s daughter, and later on as a farmer’s wife. Before the days when all beasts were slaughtered at a central professional slaughter-house, or abattoir, they were slaughtered on the farm by the farmer himself.

She paused, and said, “You know, I never really understood that verse, about ‘the blood and the water’, until I saw all the beasts strung up after they had been killed so that their blood might be drained off. It was only then that I understood that statement confirmed the real, actual death of my Saviour.”

She went on to explain what happened when slaughtered beasts were actually hung up with the blood draining from them. At first, the fluid was clearly, even vividly, red, as you would expect from blood. However, as the drainage came towards the end, the colour got paler and paler, until it was pale to the point of being colourless. It then gave the appearance of being water. It was only then that the farmer knew that the beast was actually, really, truly dead. This was later corroborated for me by a master butcher at a modern abattoir.

Put that alongside and against John 19:34: *“...there came forth blood and water.”* How clear! How lucid! The Lord Jesus not only came into the world as a man. At the end of His life on earth He did actually die. There can be no doubt at all about it. He did not enter into a temporary faint, fit, frenzy, fantasy, coma or anything like that. He did really enter into death, that He might overcome it.

The One Who is God in Person came into the world as Man. He did truly die at the end of His life upon earth. We who trust Him as our Saviour and confess Him as our Lord can be fully assured. He did actually die for us, that we might be ready for heaven while still living on earth. What a wonderful Saviour!

### **Introduction to 1 John 5:6**

As we move from the Gospel to the Epistle, we do well to remind ourselves of the following distinction.

In John 19:34 only physical, material matters are considered. The natural man can understand such things. It is therefore put to our credit that the circumstances of the crucifixion were so plain that we can have no doubt at all. Jesus did really give up His life at Calvary. He did actually die there.

In 1 John 5, we have moved on to spiritual considerations, way beyond the capacity of the natural man to take in. Only the Holy Spirit can convey and confirm what is at stake in the realm of the spirit.

Bear in mind that the primary world in God's sight is the spiritual world, not the natural, physical, material world, which is relatively secondary. God has not copied the natural world in making the spiritual world. Rather the reverse.

So, this is the statement under consideration: *"This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood"* (1 John 5:6)

### **What is the present position?**

Christ, the Son of God, is now exalted at the right hand of God. But we learn from John 14:16 that before He left this earth and ascended to heaven, He said to His disciples, *"I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever."*

That word "another" means another of the same calibre. The One Who was thus adequate to replace the disciples' Master, the Lord Jesus Christ, was the Holy Spirit. He is a divine Person Himself, and co-equal in the Triune Godhead. He is therefore the only adequate witness to all that is brought to light in scripture.

Again, in John 16:13, *"when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak."*

### **How about our own personal position before God?**

The Bible is plain, *"All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"* (Romans 3:23). Furthermore, *"every one of us shall give account of himself to God"* (Romans 14:12). There is only one way of escape. We must believe the simple gospel message, *"Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and ... He was buried, and ... rose again, according to the scriptures"* (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). Having believed that simple Gospel message, and confessed the Lord Jesus as our Saviour, we are saved (see Romans 10:9-10). We are completely clear of the righteous judgment of a Holy God, for ever, for time and for eternity.

We call this our judicial position or standing before God. The value to God of the blood of Jesus is such that it secures for us an eternal standing or status in the sight of God that we could never ever have achieved on our own behalf.

### **What about our moral state?**

Building upon our judicial clearance, the Holy Spirit has implanted within us a new nature. He has granted us the moral power to both keep the old nature under control and enjoy the new life that is possible because the Holy Spirit has brought us into a new moral state. This enables us to live in a way that is well-pleasing to the God Who has saved us.

So, our old life has been brought to an end in the death of Christ. A new life has begun. God has linked us with Christ. He is not only the One Who has died, but also the One Who has been raised again out from among the dead. Furthermore, He has given us a new nature that is capable of pleasing God. He has also given us a new power in which and by which to live that new life. That power is a Person, the Holy Spirit, Who dwells within us. He is the only power by which anything can be done for God and in the Name of the Lord Jesus. It is this aspect of the Christian life that is dealt with in 1 John.

Summing up then, there are two forms of cleansing, respectively associated with both water and blood. They are also very definitely connected with the death of Christ. They deal with the two major effects of sin. The blood of Jesus deals with its guilt. The water of the Word of God deals with sin's defiling power by the power of the Holy Spirit.

See Ephesians 5:25-26: *“Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.”*

### **What does The Holy Spirit have to say about The Water and The Blood?**

Note the specific wording. Christ “came by water and blood”. The actual concepts represented by “water” and “blood” show several vital things:

- How and why He came into this world!
- How and why He became a man!
- How and why He lived in this world!
- How and why He left this world?

That is, how and why He lived, died, rose again, and ascended to heaven where He was before, but now as a man?

Listen to a very good statement that was passed on to me many years ago when I was puzzled about the distinction. “Water and blood both have their own significance. The water has to do with cleansing our moral state. The blood deals with our judicial standing or legal status before God by expiation; that is, the payment due to God as penalty for all the sins we have ever committed. One settles the moral question. The other the judicial question. Both are absolutely essential; moral renovation and judicial clearance.”

The natural mind cannot of itself understand the depth and fullness of all that is involved. These matters are spiritual in source and character. If we are to understand them at all, it will only be as the **water** of the Word of God is opened up to us by the Holy Spirit. This is quite clearly why the witness of The Holy Spirit is emphasised as the first of the three vital witnesses that are listed in 1 John 5:8.

We have moved from considering mere material concepts, chronological details, and have entered the higher realm of spiritual and moral matters. The significance of 1 John 5:8 is vital. *“There are three that bear witness ...; the Spirit, and the water and the blood; and these three agree in one.”* Ecclesiastes 4:12 teaches us that *“a threefold cord is not quickly broken.”*

### **Spirit**

Incidentally, those translators and expositors of the scriptures who have proven themselves to be accurate, reliable and trustworthy over many years, are unanimous that the reference in 1 John 5:8 is to The Holy Spirit, not our personal spirits. The threefold witness declared here is without doubt *“the Holy Spirit, the water and the blood.”*

It is therefore only the Holy Spirit Who is available to help us to understand now, in our renewed souls, the symbolism of ‘water’ and ‘blood’ used in this special verse.

### **Water**

We are accepted by God, and granted a specifically righteous status or standing before Him, because of the value to Him of the sacrifice made by Christ upon the Cross of Calvary. In addition, we have been given a new nature. This empowers us by the Holy Spirit to live in this world in a way that is well pleasing to the God Who has saved us. He makes us ready for heaven while still living here upon earth. We have been granted a new moral state that we never knew before. We are empowered to both contain the old nature and live in the light and power of the new nature implanted and empowered by the Holy Spirit granted to us. The vehicle that is used to bring us into the knowledge and enjoyment of this is the Word of God - the water of the word of God (Ephesians 5:26).

The twofold way in which cleansing is presented in scripture is carefully distinguished. By the water of the word applied in the power of the Spirit we are born again. We are given a new life and nature which carries with it the old. Once and for all we have been spiritually bathed; that is, fully cleansed.

The death of Christ has cleansed us once and for all from our old life. In addition, we need the application of the word of God to our souls, day by day, if we are to enjoy “part with” Christ (read John 13:2-17).

The water and the Word are clearly connected in Ephesians 5:26: *“That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.”* And, again, in Psalm 119:9, *“Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to Thy word.”*

Here, towards the end of Holy Scripture, the spiritual implications and results of the work of Christ are implicit in the term “water”. But, the Holy Spirit ends the sequence with the reminder that all has been completed on a fully righteous basis by the Holy and Righteous God. That leads us back to the consideration of the truth implicit in the mention of “blood”.

### **The Blood**

In the scriptures, the use and value of blood is made quite plain early on. Leviticus 17:11 says, *“the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.”*

We are certainly fit for heaven because *“Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures”* (1 Corinthians 15:3). We have been fully cleansed by the value to God of the shedding of the precious blood of Christ. We are not only mercifully accepted by God, but we are righteously acceptable to God. All because of the cleansing power of that blood. It secures for us a standing, or status, that we could never ever have achieved on our own behalf.

The Lord Jesus came into the world with a view to giving up, in sacrifice, the life He took in manhood. Furthermore, He came into the world to take upon Himself the complete matter of dealing with sin in a way that would fully satisfy the righteous claims of The Holy God.

The Epistle to the Hebrews points out several times that His work was of such value that it only required to be done once and for all time, never ever needing to be repeated (e.g. Hebrews 9:26).

Furthermore, Romans 5:9 says, *“being now justified by the blood of Christ”*. The righteous claims of a Holy God against us have been fully met. The price of redemption has been fully paid, by the shedding of the precious blood of Christ, when He offered Himself without spot to God.

There is no doubt that the fundamental concept in justification is that it clears me of every charge that a holy God can righteously lay against me. That is what I would call the negative side of the very positive truth of justification; the righteous dealing with every valid charge that was previously hanging over me. It is a very good start, but it is only a start. It would be a very sad thing indeed if I was content to enjoy the fact of my being cleared of every charge of sin, but made no real progress on how to understand and enjoy the very positive truth that God has, in a very definite way, selected me to have a fully righteous standing or status before Him.

What a wonderful climax to the consideration of the blood of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ! Back to basics! By His sacrifice of His blood, we are ready for heaven for time and for eternity while still living here upon earth. Praise the Lord for that!

### **Closing remark**

As for me, may I be eternally grateful to the Blessed God that He has provided me with such a wonderful Saviour as Jesus Christ my Lord! Amen.

Thank you for listening to this *Truth for Today* talk number T1085 entitled “Blood and Water” from our series “Things which accompany salvation”.

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