

ARE WE SAVED BY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST?

Handwritten Talk

No Date

We hear a chant, echoing through the halls of Christendom—"Saved by the blood, saved by the precious blood of the Lamb."

In the background is a great chorus singing—"Saved by grace, wondrous, glorious grace, saved by grace alone and without works."

We wonder—what sort of religion is this, a religion that requires the shedding of the blood of a Savior to bring salvation to mortal men?

We wonder if this religion saves us men by the goodness and grace of a God without any effort on our part?

Let us inquire and seek and learn. In the providences of the Lord we have received, by revelation, some wondrous truths about the blood of Christ and the grace of God. We know whether we are saved by the blood of Christ, without works, because of his infinite grace, or whether we must labor and struggle with all the power of our souls to gain so great a glory.

Now, as with Paul, I do not profess "to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." (1 Corinthians 2:2.) But of our Blessed Lord and his atoning sacrifice I do know by the power of the Spirit. As a consequence I am able to stand as an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ and bear testimony that he has bought us with his blood and to teach the doctrines of his gospel by which salvation comes.

I know that my Redeemer lives; with Job I testify. What though the ravages of disease destroy my body; what though I am slain by the sword of death, yet I know that the Lord Jesus shall soon reign on earth and that "in my flesh shall I see God." (Job 19:25-26.)

I have received the first and greatest of all the gifts of the Spirit. It has been given to me, by the Holy Ghost, to know that Jesus Christ is the Son of Living God, and that "he was crucified for the sins of the world." (D&C 46:13.)

I am a witness that he was lifted up upon the cross of Calvary; that he was crucified, died and rose again the third day; that he ascended into heaven, where, sitting on the right hand of God the Father Almighty, he now reigns in everlasting glory' and that he will soon come again to reign among the sons of men.

He is my Brother and Friend, but he is more. He is my Lord, my God, and my King, whom I worship in the full majesty of his Godhead, and who will continue to be my friend, my Savior, my Redeemer, and my God through all the eternities that lie ahead.

I rejoice in Christ; I preach of Christ; I write of Christ. I marvel at the wonder and glory of his atoning sacrifice and look forward to the day, when kneeling before him, with his hands on my head, he will call me friend and bless me as he blessed his apostolic friends of old.

And yet above Christ stands the Father—a Holy Man, the Supreme Being, the ultimate source of all power and dominion. As the Lord Jesus, who is Jehovah, is the Redeemer, so the Father of us all, who is Elohim, is the Creator.

And no man can know by the power of the Spirit that Christ the Son is our Savior without knowing at the same time that God the Father is Lord of all. Our testimony of the Divine Sonship of Christ is also our witness that the Father is God above all.

We know and testify, therefore, that “there is a God in heaven, who is infinite and eternal; ... that he created man, male and female, after his own image and in his own likeness.” (D&C 20:17-18.)

We know and testify that this God, the Everlasting Elohim, ordained and established a plan of salvation whereby all his spirit children—Christ included!—had power to advance and progress and become like him.

This great and eternal plan of salvation—known as the Gospel of God, meaning the Father—included three things of infinite and eternal worth. First, the paradisiacal creation of this earth, of man, and of all forms of life; second, the fall of man whereby mortality and procreation and death and a probationary period become the common lot of all men; and third, an infinite and eternal atonement whereby immortality for all eternal life for the obedient became operative in the eternal scheme of things.

We know and testify that the Eternal Elohim, as the scripture says, gave unto men “commandments that they should love and serve him, the only loving and true God, and that he should be the only being whom they should worship.” (D&C 20:19.)

Thus it is that Christ worshipped the Father, and we worship him also. This it is that Christ prayed unto the Father, and we pray to him also. We do not pray to Christ, nor do we worship any God but the Father in the full and ultimate sense and in doing those things—as Christ also did them—we will become like him.

But after the creation, man fell and so, “the Almighty God gave his Only Begotten Son” to ransom his fallen children from the temporal and spiritual death brought in the world by the fall of Adam. (D&C 20:21.)

God created; Adam fell; Christ redeems; and man obeys—such are the verities upon which salvation rests.

The creation came by the grace of God, which grace is his mercy, love, and condescension; the fall came by the grace of God; the atoning sacrifice was wrought through that same infinite and eternal grace; and by the grace of God we have power, if we will, to keep the commandments and thus “work out” our “own salvation with fear and trembling” before the Lord. (Philip. 2:12.)

We glory in the goodness of God’s grace; we marvel that he has done such wondrous things for us; and our particular praise ascends to him because he provided a Savior to bring to pass our immortality and eternal life.

From creation dawn to this present hour, and from this hour through all the eternities that lie ahead, there neither has been nor will be such an act of infinite grace and power, and goodness as the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This atonement was wrought by the shedding of his own blood, amid the almost unbearable agonies of Gethsemane and then again as his beaten and bruised body hung on the cruel cross of Calvary.

Because of the atonement, all of the terms and conditions of the Father’s great and eternal plan of salvation are put in force. All that has ever been done for man is given efficacy, virtue, and force because a God descended below all things that he and his brethren might ascend above all things.

If there had been no atonement there would have been no redemption from death, hell, the devil, and endless torment. There would be no immortality, nor eternal life, continuation of the family unit in eternity, no salvation of any sort. Rather all men would become the slaves of Lucifer, suffering the sorrows of the damned with the Father of Lies, in misery like unto himself, to all eternity.

But thanks be to God the atonement is a reality. Christ, bursting the bands of death, hath taken captivity captive, brought immortality to all men, and assured those who believe and obey of eternal life in his Father’s kingdom.

To help keep these truths in our minds and to encourage us to ponder their infinite import, all of the doctrines of the gospel and all of the ordinances of salvation point our attention to them.

After Adam, obedient to the divine command, offered sacrifices, he was taught by an angel: “This thing is a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father, which is full of grace and truth.” (Moses 5:7.)

From Adam to Moses, and from Moses to Jesus Christ, for 4,000 long years, true worshippers offered sacrifices to bear record that the Lamb of God would one day shed his blood for the remission of their sins.

Then, on a memorable Paschal night, in an Upper Room, He who was the Lamb of God, broke the bread and drank the wine of the Paschal supper, all in similitude of the coming sacrifice.

As he did so, he appropriated the similitudes of the old dispensation and made them the similitudes of the new. Breaking and blessing the Paschal bread he commanded his disciples henceforth to eat of it in remembrance of his broken flesh; and blessing the Paschal wine he commanded them henceforth to drink thereof in remembrance of his spilt blood which was shed for them, it is this new sacramental ordinance, replacing the old sacrificial performances, that we partake of to this day.

It was from this Upper Room that the Lord Jesus walked the two weary miles to Gethsemane where he suffered, for us all that we might not suffer if we repent and keep the commandments.

This suffering, he said, “caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer, both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup.” (D&C 19:16-18.)

As sacrifices and the sacrament are similitudes of the atonement so also is the very ordinance of baptisms, which brings us into the Church and points our course toward a celestial inheritance.

Thus the Lord God said to father Adam: “Inasmuch as ye were born into the world by water, and blood, and the spirit, which I have made, and so became of dust a living soul, even so ye must be born again into the kingdom of heaven, of water, and of the Spirit, and be cleansed by blood, even the blood of mine Only Begotten; that ye might be sanctified from all sin, and enjoy the words of eternal life in this world, and eternal life in the world to come, even immortal glory.” (Moses 6:59.)

It was, then, on this foundation and in this setting that the Father of us all made the great pronouncement: “For by the water he keep the commandment; by the Spirit ye are justified, and by the blood ye are sanctified.” (Moses 6:59-60.)

That is to say: Salvation comes through baptism of water and the Spirit because of the shedding of the blood of Christ. If it were not for his atoning sacrifice none of us could be sanctified, none, becoming clean and spotless, would be fit associates for Gods and angels and holy beings.

Thus it is that the Lord Jesus “came into the world” to “be lifted up upon the cross.”

Thus it is that he himself acclaimed: “No unclean thing can enter into” the Father’s “kingdom; therefore nothing entereth into his rest save it be those who have washed their garments in my blood, because of their faith, and the repentance of all of their sins, and their faithfulness unto the end.”

Thus it is that he said: “Now this is the commandment: repent all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me and be baptized in my name, that ye may be sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost, that ye may stand spotless before me at the last day. Verily, verily, I say unto you, this is my gospel.” (3 Nephi 27:13-20.)

And thus it is that the Biblical word proclaims: “If we walk in the light, as” God our Father “is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” (1 John 1:7.)

Is it any wonder, then, that with Paul, “we preach Christ crucified,” (1 Cor. 1:23); Christ who was slain for the sins of the world; Christ who “died to save sinners.”

Is it any wonder that with Peter, we glory in our redemption, by “the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Peter 1:18-19) of a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

How can we do other than glory in the words of the angel who said: “Salvation was, and is, and is to come, in and through the atoning blood of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent.” (Mosiah 3:18.)

But we do more than preach “that Christ died for our sins,” and that “he rose again the third day.” (1 Cor. 15:3-4.)

We preach of a living Christ who has and does and will continue to reveal himself in our day.

We preach of the Lord of Glory who leaves his Father’s kingdom to converse with his mortal friends from time to time.

We preach of a Christ who has restored the fulness of his everlasting gospel; who has once again given men the power to bind and loose on earth and in heaven; whose arm is not shortened that he cannot heal; and who stands ready to receive all who bear his voice and heed his word.

This is the Redeemer of whom we testify. He has sent us to prepare a people to live with him when he comes again, when he comes to reign in earth as King of kings and Lord of lords.

I know that he lives and have no desires to do aught, except that which will enable me—whether in this life or in death, in mattereth not—to abide the day of his coming:

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.