

# Is There a Re-Application of the Blood?

by John Nelson Darby

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*The sermon explains the truth of the blood of Christ and how it relates to the believer's conscience, emphasizing that the blood is not re-applied to us but its value and efficacy are enjoyed by faith.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 32:1, Isaiah 1:18, John 13:10, John 15:3, Hebrews 9:12, Hebrews 10:2, Hebrews 10:14

**Topics:** "Assurance of Salvation", "The Efficacy of Christ's Sacrifice"

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## Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes the significance of understanding the application of Christ's blood in the context of salvation, arguing against the notion that the blood must be re-applied for cleansing. He asserts that believers are perfected forever through Christ's single sacrifice, which clears their consciences and allows them to approach God without fear of condemnation. Darby clarifies that while the Old Testament practices involved blood sprinkling, the New Testament reveals that Christ's offering is sufficient and does not require repetition. He highlights the importance of faith in the efficacy of Christ's sacrifice, which provides a perfect conscience before God. The sermon serves as a reminder that true holiness and liberty in Christ come from recognizing the completeness of His work on the cross.

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## Transcript

(Extracted from The Bible Herald, First Series Vol. 1, 1876, page 43-5.)

I feel the subject of the greatest possible importance, and therefore do not let it drop. Many dear souls do not see clearly the truth on the point, and suffer by it. They have not the liberty before God they might have, and true holiness suffers by it; but it is want of light, and that is not a subject of reproach.

To be reduced to such an argument, taken from a possible but uncertain illustration, as one coming up from bathing having to wash his feet, dirtied in coming up, to prove that since the first washing was by blood the second must be, is to show that a person has not much to say.

There is a cleansing or washing by water as well as by blood. I have little doubt that the real allusion is to the priest, whose whole body was washed when they were consecrated, and afterwards washed hands and feet - here only the feet. But weak as it is, the whole of the argument is founded on the first washing in John 13 being with blood, which it surely is not. All blessing is founded on the value of Christ's precious blood, from the cleansing of our conscience from sin, to the new heavens and the new earth; yea, the glory of God Himself and the Son of Man's glory above.

God's glory, our peace, and the immutable stability of all blessings depends on it. That is not the question, but whether our consciences are cleared once for all by the sacrifice of Christ, known, of course, by faith. [The article in question insists, though enveloping the matter in a mist, in substance, that we are not so cleared once for all - that the blood must be re-applied for this purpose.] The Epistle to the Hebrews declares that we are perfected for ever, and that God remembers our sins and iniquities no more; that there being only one offering, implies that the worshippers once purged should have no more conscience of sins - that if it were not so, Christ must have often suffered.

Now I do not call in question the putting or sprinkling of the blood on us. He has washed us too, it is said, from our sins in His own blood - only, He has done it. In the Old Testament we have the covenant sealed by the sprinkling of blood, or putting it on the person - the leper cleansed by it, the priests consecrated by it; but these, once for all. But there is another aspect of the blood, which is that insisted on in the Hebrews, namely, its being presented to God. You have not the application of it in the Hebrews, but its being taken within the veil.

No doubt the value of this is enjoyed by faith, but the great subject of the epistle is its being presented to God. On the great day of atonement referred to (Hebrews 9:12), there was no sprinkling of blood on the people, but on and before the mercy seat, where God sat between the cherubim, and the transfer of the sins to the scapegoat, and this, note, was what cleared their sins; and it is this these chapters insist on, adding an allusion to the red heifer, of which I will speak.

Hence, note, so far from the sprinkling of the blood of bulls and goats in the first part of Hebrews 9:13, necessarily involving its being the sprinkling of blood in the latter part (as both included in the antitype in verse 14), there was no sprinkling of the blood of bulls and of goats at all, on the great day of atonement referred to, except on the mercy seat; it was not any sprinkling of the blood on the people which cleared them. There is no foundation for this argument at all.

Sprinkling of blood on us is not spoken of in the passage. The whole argument in it is founded on Christ being offered only once, and then sitting down, having entered in once by His own blood. The only sprinkling with blood in the chapter is in verse 19 - the blood of the covenant at Mount Sinai; which was certainly not repeated, and is not the question indeed before us. In the 14th verse even, no sprinkling or application is spoken of, but of the value of it to purge the conscience - He having offered Himself without spot to God.

It is always this that is insisted on. Shedding of blood is what is urged - the value of the sacrifice, not its application by sprinkling. From verses 24 to 28, we have carefully urged, in a manner that leaves no question as to it, that it is Christ's offering Himself and entering into heaven to appear in the presence of God for us, which is the subject the Holy Ghost insists on; suffering once, appearing once in the end of the world to put away sin, bearing the sins of many, and being now at the right hand of God - in the presence of God for us - after accomplishing it once for all, or He must often have suffered. This is what is set before our minds - the value and character of the one act, and Christ being gone up on high - and this only.

The 10th chapter is equally clear. It is the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all that sanctifies by God's will. Christ is not, as the Jewish priests, ever standing occupied with a work which can never finish. He is set down when He had offered one sacrifice for sins, having no more to do for His friends till His enemies be made His footstool - "for by one offering He has perfected for ever them that are sanctified;" and to this the Holy Ghost testifies. God's will, Christ's work (now set down), the Holy Ghost's testimony

concur to give constant assurance in coming to God. There is no thought of sprinkling or applying the blood to us in the passage. It is another order of thought - many offerings, which can never take away sins, or one, offered once by Him who is now gone to God. Another remark is needed here, the force of "for ever." It is continuous or continual. It is translated rightly in verse 1 - "offered continually." It was constantly going on. Now, Christ having offered one sacrifice of Him self, sits down continuously, and we are continuously perfect: our conscience is as constantly perfect as Christ is constantly sitting at God's right hand. The solemn warning which follows confirms, in the strongest way, the same truth, and the true sense of the passage. If this sacrifice be given up, if we sin wilfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there is no more an offering for sins, but a fearful looking for of judgment. It is not re-application - the value of the blood sprinkled on us being lost - but an impossibility of repetition of what has been done, because it has been done once for all. The whole passage is the urgent insisting on this, that this blessed efficacy cannot be repeated. Indeed this is universally the case in the Hebrews. Sin, if returned to, is always looked at as finally fatal. It is drawing back to perdition - impossibility to renew to repentance. At any rate, the point here is not repetition of sprinkling to cleanse, but the impossibility of repetition of that which cleanses, as that which is done once for all. Nor is it exactly justification, though akin to it; justification has judgment in view - is judicial in its character. This contemplates entrance into the holiest, and a present and constant cleanness suited to and necessary for it - a perfect conscience - no more conscience of sins - or a new sacrifice must be offered, and repeated suffering of Christ, which is impossible. By one offering He has perfected for ever - for a constant state - them that are sanctified. I do not see how anything can be clearer or more definite and positive, I am as constantly perfect as Christ is constantly sitting at the right hand of God - and, indeed, because He is, appearing in the presence of God for me, the perpetual living witness that all my sins are gone, for He is there who bore them, and all the value of His blood who has cleansed me by it.

But I am told that the washing of the feet in John 13 is by blood. The simple answer is, the chapter speaks of water, not of blood - "The Lord poured water in a basin;" that is not blood. What Peter looked for when the Lord said "If I wash thee not," was water, not blood; and to this the Lord answers, "He that is washed," replying to Peter, who referred to the water He had in the basin, "needeth not, save to wash his feet." The whole chapter speaks of water and of nothing else. It is what He had in the basin - what He was cleansing their feet with, and what the whole chapter is about, the Lord actually using it then, and referring to it. I speak of the word, as signified by it, because, as the Lord, referring to this water-washing which was before their eyes, says, "Ye are clean, but not all," Judas being there; and in John 15, Judas being gone, "Now (already) ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." It is a gratuitous and mischievous alteration of the passage to apply it to blood, when the Lord had the water there and was speaking of it. A man cannot be converted and born twice of the word, any more than he can be justified and cleansed with blood twice.

The Red Heifer remains. One thing is perfectly clear - there is no sprinkling the man with blood in the account given. The blood was sprinkled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, seven times, as it was on the mercy seat on the great day of atonement. As a fact, the man was sprinkled with running water with the ashes in it. If it is merely meant that the blood of Christ is the basis of all cleansing, I receive it fully. But the sprinkling of the blood is brought in here definitely and positively, elsewhere than on the man the blood was sprinkled with perfect efficacy, seven times, at the door of the tabernacle, where the people met God. There was no sprinkling with blood to cleanse, and what was noted was, that the sin had been dealt with long before, and consumed, so to speak, when the heifer was killed and burned. The thing the man was cleansed with was running water, and the ashes which were a witness that this was so.

There was no application or sprinkling of blood as blood, but the witness that that had been done long ago, the blood was gone in the fire, shed and sprinkled at the door of the tabernacle - the sin gone - according to the holiness of God's nature, and the efficacy of Christ's offering, and the value of it, perpetually before God, at the place where the people met him. There was no sprinkling with blood, but the witness of the unbearableness of sin to God, according to that which had consumed and put it away as to us long ago; and the blood had disappeared in the sacrifice which had been consumed, and in which sin had been judged, while its efficacy remained constantly under the eye of God, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, where, and where only, it was sprinkled as shed blood. For the rest, as made sin, all had been consumed in the fire of God's judgment.

This is all they have to say to deny the plain statement - the blessed statement - that we are perfected for ever. No instance, no word of re-application of the blood, or re-sprinkling with blood, can they find. That is quite certain. It is only an effort to make out that what is expressly water, in Scripture, means blood, in order to deprive us of what Scripture gives - a perfect conscience - no more conscience of sins when once purged.

As to the remarks on our washing one another's feet, forgiveness has nothing to do with it, that is only as to what concerns ourselves. We cannot apply blood to another, but we can, by grace, apply the word and not suffer sin on our brother. What is said is hardly worth the words I have spent upon it. The statement that the passage quoted from the Hebrews applies only to the objective efficacy, not the subjective condition of the soul, is met by the simple remark, that the passage speaks of the objective efficacy in its effect on the subjective condition, namely, no more conscience of sins.

I never saw a more hopeless effort to get rid of the direct statement of Scripture, a more utter absence of apprehension of what it says, in any comment in my life. I insist on its being its objective efficacy, not application, here; but the whole object of the passage is to show that this, known by faith, has complete efficacy on the subjective condition, namely, that it purges the conscience; in this sense making us perfect for ever - continuously. Is not that a subjective condition? I wish for no greater testimony that the opponents of this blessed truth are denying what Scripture states, and have not apprehended God's testimony at all. If you want a proof of the incompetency of unbelief, you have only to read this paragraph and compare it with the 9th and 10th of Hebrews.

A purged conscience - a perfect conscience. This, they say, is "conscience as to objective efficacy of the sacrifice, not the subjective condition of one's own soul." The whole object of the passage being to show that faith in the objective efficacy has this subjective effect. Such is unbelief. That should draw out only gracious diligence to remove it. The effort to cultivate unbelief in the blessed word, and hinder souls receiving it is a graver thing.

As to hypothetical circumstances for a Jewish conscience, as is alleged as to Hebrews 10, they are Christianity, as it there goes on to explain. This is all very bad. But I repeat here, the question is not treated judicially in Hebrews. It is a question of boldness to enter into the holiest, and that is always ours. Psalm 32 just proves the contrary of that for which it is cited. The confession spoken of - led to being forgiven, and no imputation left. The confession was not of sin committed subsequent to the forgiveness spoken of in the first verse, but what led to it, as plain as words can make it, and then no sin was imputed. He had kept silence, was at last brought to confess, and so had forgiveness; and the apostle uses it to show a state of no imputation of sin. There, too, the Apostle urges, the objective faith gives the subjective state of peace with God.

The whole paper, then, is simply a denial of the truth of the purging of a believer's conscience - a perfecting us for ever in an uninterrupted state as to this before God. It seeks with vain efforts to make the water mean blood, leaving no place for the scriptural use of the water - plunging the believer back into uncertainty of conscience before God, instead of applying the judgment of failure to a question of holiness, for one who walks in the light as God is in the light, never allowing the soul to get beyond the question of guilt, and making it content when that is settled, falsifying, as has been done ever since the Scriptures have been closed, the whole truth of Christianity for the souls of men. Unbelief in the true force of Hebrews 10, and the truth contained in it, as to the true subjective condition of the Christian, was the real origin of all the superstition and corruption of the Church.

I knew the case of a charitable institution in Ireland, where New Testaments were left to be read by those for whose advantage it was carried on, where Hebrews 9 and 10 were torn out, and when the guilty ones were discovered, they said if that were true the priests misled them, and that they did not believe. And now Protestant teachers are trying to do away its force; but this began immediately after the Apostles' decease. The utter weakness of the effort here to get rid of the truth is more manifest than usual, by the attempt to say that the conscience being purged, and we perfect as to it, is not a subjective condition of the soul. It is tantamount to a confession that they have no ground to stand upon.

Other points I might notice, but my object, and only object, is to keep, by answering this paper, this great truth before the soul - that by one offering Christ has perfected us for ever; and that the worshippers once purged through that offering should have no more conscience of sins.

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Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/john-nelson-darby/is-there-a-re-application-of-the-blood/>

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