

“The Sprinkled Blood” (Hebrews 12:22–29)
(4.9.23 – Easter)

Hebrews 12:22–29 (NIV84)

²² But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly,²³ to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect,²⁴ to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

²⁵ See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven?²⁶ At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, “Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.”²⁷ The words “once more” indicate the removing of what can be shaken—that is, created things—so that what cannot be shaken may remain.

²⁸ Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe,²⁹ for our “God is a consuming fire.”

The word of God for the people of God.

LET US PRAY.

Title: **"The Sprinkled Blood"**

INTRODUCTION:

Let me paraphrase the Apostle Peter's greeting in his first letter: from Pastor Don, a disciple of Jesus Christ, To God's elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout Smithville, Galloway and Atlantic County, who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood:

Grace and peace be yours in abundance.

You and I, and every follower of Jesus, have been sprinkled by His blood. This is a much deeper subject than I originally thought when I chose this scripture and title. When Charles Spurgeon preached this text, he found that he had to continue into the Sunday night sermon. I should not have been surprised though.

Hundreds of times in the Old Testament the sprinkling of blood is referenced. It is foundational to the Jewish sacrificial system that God established for His Chosen People. It was central to their history and their culture.

Our text today starts with the word **but**: but you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. This is contrasted with Mount Sinai, where Moses received The Ten Commandments on the stone tablets, written by the finger of God. Hebrews 12:18–19 (NIV84)

¹⁸You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm; ¹⁹to a trumpet blast or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them.

In fact, comparison is a key feature of the Book of Hebrews. Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of all the requirements of the Jewish Law. Remember that Jesus claimed that Himself. Jesus is not only our High Priest, but His sacrifice was the perfect and final sacrifice.

Hebrews 9:18–22 (NIV84)

¹⁸This is why even the first covenant was not put into effect without blood. ¹⁹When Moses had proclaimed every commandment of the law to all the people, he took the blood of calves, together with water, scarlet wool and branches of hyssop, and sprinkled the scroll and all the people. ²⁰He said, "This is the blood of the covenant, which God has commanded you to keep."²¹ In the same way,

he sprinkled with the blood both the tabernacle and everything used in its ceremonies.²² In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

Hebrews 9:11–14 (NIV84) *The Blood of Christ*

¹¹ When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation.¹² He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption.¹³ The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean.¹⁴ How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

BODY:

Today's scripture is not a standard one for Easter Sunday, but God the Holy Spirit had His hand on me when I chose it. As happens every year, preachers prepare Good Friday sermons and Easter sermons concurrently. For Good Friday, that

means the Gospel accounts of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, the preparation for Passover, the Last Supper, His arrest, trial, Passion, and crucifixion. For Easter, that means the events surrounding Jesus' miraculous resurrection, the most important event in history.

But my preparation was different. I was studying the Good Friday material in parallel to the Book of Hebrews. And, a strange thing happened. When I read about the crowd choosing Barabbas, a guilty rebel, over Jesus, a perfectly innocent man, I had an "aha" moment.

²¹ "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" asked the governor.

"Barabbas," they answered.

²² "What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called Christ?" Pilate asked.

They all answered, "Crucify him!"

²³ "Why? What crime has he committed?" asked Pilate.

But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!"

²⁴ When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd.

“I am innocent of this man’s blood,” he said. “It is your responsibility!”

²⁵All the people answered, “Let his blood be on us and on our children!”

They are saying that we take full responsibility for our choice. They are in effect, making a vow. If we are wrong, let us be condemned. For emphasis, they include this condemnation to fall upon our children too. As Christians, this is an incomprehensible and unfathomable oath, leading to eternity in Hell.

While wrestling with this thought, I had my moment of illumination. Though they didn’t realize what they were saying, it was in reality what they needed. It is the same thing that every person on earth needs. We need the blood of Jesus to cover us.

Instead of them, and us, taking on the responsibility for Jesus’ death, we are covered by Jesus sacrificial blood. He pronounced it on the cross, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”

What can wash away my sin?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.
What can make me whole again?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

For my pardon this I see:
nothing but the blood of Jesus.
For my cleansing this my plea:
nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Nothing can for sin atone:
nothing but the blood of Jesus.
Naught of good that I have done:
nothing but the blood of Jesus.

This is all my hope and peace:
nothing but the blood of Jesus.
This is all my righteousness:
nothing but the blood of Jesus.

While somewhat natural, we make a mistake when we focus only on individual salvation. The sprinkled blood of Jesus is not limited like Abel's blood that called out from the ground to God. We see in our central text that it is part of the coming Kingdom of God – along with thousands upon thousands of angels – the triumphant church – and Jesus Himself.

In the fifth chapter of Revelation, the Lamb of God sits on the throne. He is honored and glorified:
Revelation 5:9–10 (NIV84)

⁹And they sang a new song:

“You are worthy to take the scroll

and to open its seals,
because you were slain,
and **with your blood** you purchased men for God
from every tribe and language and people and
nation.

¹⁰ You have made them to be a kingdom and
priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the
earth.”

The “blood” is efficacious in many ways. When
Moses went to Pharaoh, the 10th and final plague
was the Angel of Death would kill the first born of
every household. The Chosen People were to
sacrifice an unblemished lamb. Then they were to
cover their doorframes with the blood. When the
Angel of Death saw the blood, He would Pass Over
that house and those within were preserved.

In my preparation this week, I read something I
had never thought about before. When Jesus was
entering Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, so were
thousands of sheep. To celebrate the Passover
Feast, these sheep were to be sacrificed. How
perfectly fitting that the Perfect Lamb of God that
was slain before the foundation of the world would
enter Jerusalem at Passover.

Not only does the blood preserve, it also confirms covenants. Jesus continued that tradition at the Last Supper. Matthew 26:28 (NIV84) **“This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”** We celebrate that covenant whenever we come to the Lord’s Table.

The blood of Jesus also purifies. 1 John 1:7 (NIV84) But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

The sprinkling of Jesus’ blood changes the world. He shed his blood on the ground of religion. He shed his blood on the ground of political power. He shed his blood on the culture. He shed his blood on the ground of sin. He shed his blood on the ground of death.

Revelation 21:1–5 (NIV84) *The New Jerusalem*

21 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them

and be their God.⁴ He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

⁵ He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

CONCLUSION:

On Palm Sunday, our scripture was John 12:20 and following. There, Jesus declares, “**Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out.**” Then on the cross, He announces, “**It is finished.**”

On Good Friday, the disciples had scattered. Only John and the faithful women were at the cross. There was blood, pain, darkness, and death. It seemed that the prince of this world had won. Jesus was dead. Saturday must have been a terrible day indeed. Hope must have been displaced by depression. How can this be?

But that first Sunday would change the world.
Matthew 28:1–8 (NIV84) *The Resurrection*

28 After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.

²There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. ⁴The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.

⁵The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. ⁶He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. ⁷Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you."

⁸So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples.

Like the crowd that chose Barabbas over Jesus, we too must make a choice. We must choose to be sprinkled with the blood of Jesus. See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks from heaven. On Mount Sinai His voice shook the earth. In the day to come, heaven AND earth will be shaken. May the blood of Jesus be upon me and my children and my children's children. What say you?

Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our "God is a consuming fire."

Amen and amen. Let us pray.