

WORLD VIDEO BIBLE SCHOOL

Fundamentals of the Faith

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LESSON #19 — HOW DOES ONE CONTACT JESUS' BLOOD (PART 1)

But a good question is, with those things in mind, how is it that man receives the benefits of the blood of Jesus Christ? How is it that we contact the saving blood of Jesus? That's a very important question. It's a question that all of us ought to be interested in. And I'm sure you are, or you wouldn't be taking the time to study these matters with us. How is it that we can contact the cleansing blood of Jesus? We know that's the only thing that's powerful enough to wash our sins away. So we want to find the answer. Surely God has revealed to us what the answer is. And that's what we want to do. We want to study: What is the answer?

One question that we might ask in trying to answer this question: Is it through works of the old law, or other manmade laws, customs, or traditions that you and I can contact the saving blood of Christ? Through the old law, through man's laws, or customs or traditions? Well, let's go to the Bible and answer the question from God.

Romans, chapter 3, verse 20, is a good passage of scripture that gives us God's answer to that question. Romans, the third chapter, and verse 20. God says through His inspired spokesman Paul, "Therefore, by the deeds of the law, no flesh will be justified in His sight. For by the law, is the knowledge of sin." So what does God say? Clearly, he says, "By the deeds of the law" — the old law, the law that was nailed to the cross by Jesus (Colossians 2:14-16). By that law, no flesh can be justified in God's sight, no person, no human being, can be justified. And we've seen that the term justified was a legal term, and it meant to be declared innocent, to be freed from guilt, to be acquitted. So no one can be justified, can be declared innocent, by their perfect keeping of the old law, or any law, whether they were Old Law was given by God, or whether their man made laws. Nobody can be justified can be declared innocent in that way.

Then what is the answer? How is it that we can be justified, declared innocent, contact the blood of Christ? Well, a good passage is right there where we are now, only we need to go further than Romans chapter 3, verse 20. We need to read verses 21 through 28. Let's look at those verses in this passage. "But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, which is through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth to be a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time, His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law."

Well, here's a long passage of Scripture in which God talks about the righteousness of God. A better translation of that word would be, "the justification that God makes possible." That is, we can be declared righteous, if we meet God's conditions. And what does he talk about throughout this passage? He talks about the importance of faith. He talks about the blood of Christ. He talks about God's grace. He talks about Jesus, who was a propitiation. Now, what does that word mean? It means the covering. The covering for sin was Jesus Christ. When He gave His body and His blood, He made Himself the propitiation for sin, the covering for sin. If we will receive the benefits of the blood of Christ, those sins will be covered by that blood, by our Savior. So all of these things are involved: it's through faith, it's through belief in Jesus, it's through belief in the power of His blood.

Because of the length of that passage, we'd like to bring a chart to the screen, to briefly summarize the major points that God made on this subject of justification, or righteousness. Let's look at them one at a time. First of all, he says that it's necessary to have faith in Christ. We must believe in Jesus, if we hope to contact His cleansing blood and to have the forgiveness of sins. Secondly, he mentioned that it's by God's grace. That is, it is a gift from God. But also keep in mind in that same verse, he said, it was through the redemption, which is in Christ Jesus. And we'll talk about the importance of being in Christ, and how one can be placed in Christ, later in the study. Then, thirdly, he mentions faith in His blood. It's by the blood of Jesus, that our sins can be washed, and we have to believe in that fact. Then next, through the forbearance of God, that is, through the long suffering of God. God was patient in dealing with us as human beings, and has been patient from the beginning of time.

So we see in that passage, in those verses, a mixture things, a combination of things. Some things God has done. He's made His grace possible. He gave His Son as a propitiation for our sins. He has made it possible for us to receive this salvation. But man has a part to play in this too. It's not by grace alone, that we're saved. But it's by grace through faith, the faith in Jesus, the faith in the power of His blood.

Some people take passages like this, and John 3:16, which we studied earlier, and they say, "We're saved by faith alone, by faith only." That is, all we have to do is believe in God, believe in Jesus, and accept Jesus as our personal Savior, and we're saved. No further action required on our part, because it's by God's grace, and it's through faith. Is that what the Bible teaches. We know that that's what's taught in the religious world. You can turn on the television, or you can listen to the radio, or you can read printed material from denominational sources and hear that every day. One creed book says, "The doctrine of justification by faith alone is a most Holy Doctrine full of comfort." That's a quotation of the statement of a denominational creed book. The denominational world believes in the doctrine of salvation by faith alone, faith only.

But the question is: What does God say? Not a creed book. Now what some preacher says. But what does God say in His Word? Are we saved by faith alone? Are we justified by faith alone? Well, probably the best passage of Scripture to give God's answer to that question is found in the book of James, in James chapter 2, beginning with verse 14. And we'd like to take a few minutes of our study time to look at that verse, that passage, and study in detail what God is saying to us here. Let's turn to James chapter 2, beginning with verse 14. James asked a question by the inspiration of God, "What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has

faith, but does not have works? Can faith save him?" There's the question that James proposes to answer by the inspiration of God. Can faith without works save a person? Literally, the Greek text says, "Can that faith, save him?" What faith? The faith that is without works; without works of obedience to God. That's the question that James is going to answer by the inspiration of God in the rest of this passage. So we need to be alert, and look for God's answer to that question.

The first answer is found in verse 17 of the same chapter. He says, "Thus, also, faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead." That's a remarkable statement, considering what is taught in the religious world. They say that we're saved by faith without works. God says, "Faith without works is dead." Do you mean to tell me that we're saved by a dead faith? That's certainly not what God is saying here. He's saying, if we just have faith and have no works of obedience to Him, then we have a dead faith and we never could be expected to be saved by dead faith. We want to have a living faith, not a dead faith.

Then let's look at verse 19. "You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble." Notice what God's saying. Here's faith alone. Here's faith only, portrayed in verse 19. The demons believe in God. They believe that God exists. They know about God. Those demons who lived in people in the first century knew about Jesus. They knew who He was, they knew what He was there for. They believed in Him. But the Bible says that they tremble. Well, they have faith only. They must be saved. No, that's not what God says. They have faith only, and they tremble, in fear of the judgment of God. Because they know they have chosen not to obey God. And that is required, not just faith alone.

Then in verse 20: "But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?" There's the second time that statement appears in this context. And notice, this is God speaking, not me. God says, if we think that faith without works is going to save us, we're foolish. That's pretty strong language, but that's the Word of God. And James said, by the inspiration of God, "Faith without works is dead." We can't be saved by a dead faith.

Now, let's look at verse 22. "Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works, faith was made perfect." There is a key passage of Scripture: James 2, verse 22. He's talking about the example of Abraham, and how Abraham was justified by faith. But it wasn't faith alone. It was faith which work together, combined together, with works of obedience. That's the kind of faith that saves. That's true Biblical faith. Faith, which combines with works of obedience, and by those works of obedience to God faith is made perfect. It's made complete, entire, whole. So faith without works is not complete. It's an incomplete dead faith, and it won't save anyone. If we want to be saved, we have to combine our faith with works of obedience to God. Not works of obedience to some manmade doctrine or creed book or whatever, but works of obedience to God to make our faith complete, entire, perfect.

Then verse 24 of this context, "You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only." The only place in the Bible where the phrase "faith only" is found, God says, "We are not justified by faith only." Then how can people teach that we are? Because they have perverted, they have twisted, distorted the Word of God. We pray that they will repent of that, that they may teach that which is true. This passage teaches us that we're justified by works of obedience to God, and not by faith alone.

Then verse 26, “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.” God says it clearly again, the third time in this passage, that faith without works is dead. So that faith that does not have works of obedience to God is a dead faith. We must have a living faith. Notice the illustration that he makes in verse 26. As the body separated from the spirit is dead. When our spirit leaves our body, we will die physically, our body will die, our spirit will live on. But he said, “Just as the body separated from the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead.” So if you and I want to be saved, justified, declared innocent by Almighty God, then we need to have a living, active, obedient faith that strives to do the will of God, out of a heart filled with love.

Well, when we see a passage like that, and we see the doctrine of justification by faith alone destroyed by God's Word, then our question becomes: How is it that our faith is expressed in such a way that we contact the blood of Christ and thus have our sins cleansed, washed away from our souls, and thus are justified declared innocent by God? How is it that that occurs? Well, we want to study for the remainder of this class and also into the next class, God's answer to that question.