

“His Blood Be on Us!”

Have you ever suddenly discovered a new insight into a traditional interpretation of a Bible passage? Such an unexpected revelation can be so startling that instantly it catapults the Bible student to a mountaintop prospect of appreciation for God’s amazing Word. Recently, I was blessed to have just such an experience.

“Michigan Men of Faith,” a special conference held in Livonia, Michigan, provided the occasion. The day’s activities seemed supercharged by the Holy Spirit, and so it was particularly fitting that Elder Dwight Nelson’s closing devotional message should provide the perfect capstone to an already gloriously memorable conference.

Nelson made pointed reference to the blessing that Roger Morneau’s books have been in his own devotional experience. The many who have read any of these fine books on the results of dynamic prayer know that the author consistently encourages a daily morning meditation of Matthew 27:24–54 to put Christian pilgrims in the proper frame of mind as they contemplate the astounding sacrifice of Jesus for a race of sinners. Nelson shared with us something new, however, in his interpretation of verse 25: “Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children!”[emphasis supplied]. More on Nelson’s contribution shortly.

Now, the traditional exegesis of this text has proceeded along the lines of the following insights gleaned from the pen of inspiration.

That awful cry [of the Jews, “His blood be on us, and on our children.”] ascended to the throne of God. That sentence, pronounced upon themselves, was written in Heaven. That prayer was heard. The blood of the Son of God was upon their children and their children’s children, a perpetual curse.

Terribly was it realized in the destruction of Jerusalem. Terribly has it been manifested in the condition of the Jewish nation for eighteen hundred years,—a branch severed from the vine, a dead, fruitless branch, to be gathered up and burned. From land to land throughout the world, from century to century, dead, dead in trespasses and sins!—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 739.

In describing Titus’s siege and destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, Ellen White recounts the horrors suffered by thousands of Jews by famine, pestilence, the scourge, torture, and crucifixion. She writes, singling out death by crucifixion,

Hundreds were daily put to death in this manner, and the dreadful work continued until, along the Valley of Jehoshaphat and at Calvary, crosses were erected in so great numbers that there was scarcely room to move among them. So terribly was fulfilled the profane prayer uttered forty years before, “His blood be on us, and on our children.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 32.

And the awful words [of Caiaphas] were echoed by the priests, and reechoed by the people.

It was a terrible sentence to pass upon themselves. It was an awful heritage to hand down to their posterity.

Literally was this fulfilled upon themselves in the fearful scenes of the destruction of Jerusalem, about forty years later.

Literally has it been fulfilled in the scattered, despised, and oppressed condition of their

descendants since that day.—*The Story of Jesus*, p. 138.

The traditional view of Matthew 27:25 is quite correct. These are the stark realities of a nation's self-inflicted curse. History all too excruciatingly bears out the sad truth of the Jewish nation reaping a bitter harvest of wormwood and gall. We hasten to add, however, that individual Jews (and individuals of any race or culture, for that matter) are still, as always, the objects of the Saviour's redeeming love: "God so loved the *world*" omits no one save the finally impenitent, those who adamantly *refuse* to be covered by the precious blood of the smitten Lamb.

Ah! There it is. Do you see the other side of verse 25 that caught the imagination of Dwight Nelson? We have reviewed the rather obvious side, the literal interpretation of this text as a *curse*. Yet there is also a profound, compelling, *spiritual* dimension, which sees in this verse a stupendous **blessing!**

Indeed, Lord, may the blood of Jesus be on us, and on our children. Without the cleansing, purifying merits of Jesus' blood, we are perfectly vulnerable to the assaults of the evil one; we would be hopeless, lost.

After describing how he meditates on this passage of Scripture during the morning watch, Nelson then goes on to make a deeply personal, powerful application, as he prays in turn for each member of his family. What follows is my own application of this devotional method, adapted from Nelson's remarks.

As I prayerfully reflect upon the text of Matthew 27:25, in my imagination I am transported to the foot of the cross, having in my hands a basin. In this I catch some of the precious drops of blood as they fall from my freshly stricken Saviour, the antitypical Lamb of God. I have with me also a bunch of hyssop. Transported back to my home, I quickly ascend the stairs until I stand at the doorway of the master bedchamber, the one I share with my beloved bride, Penny. I dip the hyssop into the warm blood (and the overwhelming realization comes: My Saviour's holy *life* is in this blood!), sprinkling it on the doorposts, while beseeching God to impute the merits of Christ's blood to our souls, thereby fortifying us both individually and within the corporate *union* He has made of us through the sacred ordinance of marriage.

Next, I proceed with basin and hyssop to the doorway of our daughter Kelly's bedchamber. Again, I sprinkle some of the Lamb's blood on the doorposts, pleading with the Father to ascribe its saving efficacy to her soul, asking also that she be kept in the shadow of the Lord's pavilion and shielded from the wily thrusts of the enemy of souls. I pray that her life may be a trophy of God's amazing grace.

Finally, in my mind's eye, I travel a short distance to the home of our newlywed son, Jason, and his bride, Johanna. The still-warm blood in hand, I dip the hyssop once more, sprinkling it on the doorposts of their home. I implore my Father again to show favor by crediting Jesus' meritorious blood to their account, protecting them from evil and causing their union to be blessed in every material and spiritual way.

I finish my meditations in this frame of mind. My powers of sanctified imagination and of concentration have been stretched uncommonly by the exercise, and I feel closer to my Lord than I have in a long time. I rest in His promises, come what may. I now feel ready to meet the challenges and the blessings that this day will bring.

Certain others have been able to capture, to an extraordinary degree, the essence of the true meaning of Christ's atoning blood in words of tuneful blessing that have found a place of lodgment in many a thoughtful heart. In Phoebe Palmer's poetic phraseology, for example, we have the enduring hymn, "The Cleansing Wave"—

1) O now I see the crimson wave, / The fountain deep and wide; / Jesus, my Lord,

- mighty to save, / Points to His wounded side.
- 2) I see the new creation rise, / I hear the speaking blood; / It speaks—polluted nature dies, / Sinks 'neath the cleansing flood.
 - 3) I rise to walk in Heaven's own light, / Above the world and sin; / With heart made pure and garments white, / And Christ enthroned within.
 - 4) Amazing grace! 'tis Heaven below / To feel the blood applied, / And Jesus, only Jesus, know, / My Jesus crucified.

Refrain: The cleansing stream I see, I see, / I plunge, and O, it cleanseth me! / O praise the Lord! it cleanseth me, / It cleanseth me, yes, cleanseth me.

And again, in the lyrics of the great Gospel hymn by Lewis E. Jones, “Power in the Blood”—

- 1) Would you be free from the burden of sin? / There's pow'r in the blood, pow'r in the blood; / Would you o'er evil a victory win? / There's wonderful pow'r in the blood.
- 2) Would you be free from your passion and pride? / There's pow'r in the blood, pow'r in the blood; / Come for a cleansing to Calvary's tide? / There's wonderful pow'r in the blood.
- 3) Would you do service for Jesus your King? / There's pow'r in the blood, pow'r in the blood; / Would you live daily His praises to sing? / There's wonderful pow'r in the blood.

Refrain: There is pow'r, pow'r, wonder-working pow'r / In the blood of the Lamb; / There is pow'r, pow'r, wonder-working pow'r / In the precious blood of the Lamb.

I find myself humming these great hymns, revelling in their messages to my heart. My prayer life has suddenly taken on new meaning, as has my understanding of what it means to receive as a lavish blessing, words originally intended to curse. I begin to sense, as never before, the boundless love of my Saviour, the limitless power of the plan of salvation. I am constrained to say, more forcefully this time, May His blood, indeed, be upon each of us, and on all our children!