

When applied, "the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). The first time this was preached on the Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection, "Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them" (Acts 2:41). Beginning then, "the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47), because the church of Christ are those who have been "purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28).

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the offer, by God's grace, of the sacrificial blood which can save. A sinner's salvation through that blood is made possible, by faith, in responding to that offer with obedience. "Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin *leading* to death, or of obedience *leading* to righteousness? But God be thanked that *though* you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness" (Romans 6:16-18). No one has been saved by Jesus' blood who has left out any part of the Gospel, or obedience to it!

-----**John T. Polk II**

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**DID CHRIST DIE IN VAIN?
(His Blood)
by John T. Polk II**

The Apostle Paul wrote, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain" (Galatians 2:20-21).

It is only by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ that any sinner may be saved. Jesus has said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6). The Apostle Peter preached, "Yes, And all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days" (Acts 3:24), and added, "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

When Jesus began His public preaching, John the Baptist identified Him as "The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). There is only One whose blood sacrifice can save from sin. "But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made

with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption" (Hebrews 9:11-12).

The Gospel of Jesus Christ, therefore is completely dependent upon His precious sacrifice. "Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you--unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). No one has preached that Gospel who would leave out any part of His life, death, and resurrection. It is in His death we have hope of salvation, and in His resurrection that we have hope for a better life on earth as a Christian, and in Heaven forever. "Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, *called to be* an apostle, separated to the gospel of God which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, *and declared to be* the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of

holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1:1-4).

It is that Gospel that a sinner must appeal to in order to be saved by Jesus' blood. "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together *in the likeness of His* death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin" (Romans 6:1-6).

It is "by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" as Paul wrote in Galatians 2:20, that a sinner will "repent," that is, choose to end the sinful life ("died to sin"). But, it is through the burial of baptism that a sinner actually enters the "death" of Jesus, certainly not into the same physical tomb, but a watery likeness. A sinner does not need to actually be crucified on a cross, like Jesus, but "die to sin" through repentance. Philip "preached Jesus to him. Now as they went down the road, they came to

some water. And the eunuch said, 'See, *here is* water. What hinders me from being baptized?' Then Philip said, 'If you believe with all your heart, you may.' And he answered and said, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.' So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him" (Acts 8:35-38). Faith leads to repentance, which leads to confession, and then to baptism. It is in being baptized that a sinner, for the first time, is "united together in the likeness of His death" and therefore, only arising from baptism is *in the likeness of His* resurrection."

Jesus Christ died for our sins on His cross, and we must die to our sins because of His cross. Jesus was buried in a tomb, and the sinner must enter that death through baptism, a "tomb." God raised Jesus the third day to prove He was, indeed, the Son of God, and the sinner must arise from the grave of baptism to "walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:5) with the full assurance that his "old man was crucified with Him that the body of sin might be done away with" (Romans 6:6). That dead body was left behind in the baptism, having been washed by Jesus' blood. Saul of Tarsus, after waiting three days to hear what to do to be saved, was told by Ananias, "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).