



## HOW JESUS SAVES US

*“How does one enter the presence of God to receive salvation now and forever?”*

**Through the blood of Jesus.**

**D**uring the pandemic, a virus infected the entire world and changed our lives. This is nothing new. God’s story of the world in the Bible narrates how the creation, which God created good, was infected by the virus of sin from the disobedience of our first ancestors, Adam and Eve, who wanted to be like God (GEN. 3:5). Since that day in the garden when the serpent deceived them, our world has been infected with the consequences of sin — sickness, death and the devil. So, God cast out the first human beings from the paradise He created for them. But with this exile was a promise: There will be a way for sinful human beings to stand in the presence of God to receive salvation now and forever (GEN. 3:15).

However, the presence of God must be mediated through sacrifices of blood. The first thing our ancestors did after the fall into sin was sacrifice an animal in order that by the animal’s blood they might enter God’s presence, because the life of the animal was in the blood (GEN. 4:3-4). Later on, the Lord said to Moses: “The life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls” (LEV. 17:11). The skins of those animals were used to cover up the nakedness of our first ancestors, for they now noticed their shame because of their sin (GEN. 3:21).

The history of Abraham’s children is a history of blood sacrifices. To sacrifice is to “cut a covenant” between two persons, laying down the pieces of the slain animal and each person

walking through the space between them with an oath that if either person should break the covenant, he or she could be cut up like the sacrificed animal. When God cut a covenant

with Abraham, it was His presence in a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch that passed between the severed pieces of the animal (GEN. 15:17). The unilateral presence of God in this sacrifice taught Abraham that God would shoulder the burden if the covenant was broken. God was pointing to the day when He would send His Son to be a sacrifice to atone for our sins and for our disobedience in breaking His commands. When God asked faithful Abraham to sacrifice his son, it was a glimpse of what was going to happen when God sent His very own Son in the flesh. God’s mercy provided Abraham a ram in place of his son, Isaac (GEN. 22:13).

When the fullness of time had come, God sent His Son into the world through the womb of the virgin Mary (LUKE 1:31). John 3:16 tells us, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” This was a divine invasion where God broke into our world now present in the flesh of a baby born in Bethlehem (LUKE 2:1-20). In the Baby Jesus, God was present to make right what had gone wrong from the fall into sin. And He remains with us: “And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (MATT. 28:20).

Can you imagine how many lambs were slaughtered in the tabernacle and then in the temple of Jerusalem (LEVITICUS AND 2 CHRONICLES 7)? Yet even these millions of liters of blood were not sufficient to atone for our sins.

The Creator has come to His creation to make all things new. From now on until the end of the ages, Jesus Christ, the very Son of God, is present in the world in His body to restore us back to Himself through His blood.

Into this creation broken by sin and death, to a world infected with disease and haunted by demons, to a people in despair over their lives, Jesus came in His frail flesh and brought healing through His own blood. This is the peace that Jesus brings. Nothing spectacular, only mercy for sick sinners who yearn to be whole and holy again.

Jesus journeyed to Jerusalem burdened by our sin and our sickness. For in healing this creation, Jesus who knew no sin became sin for us. He traveled the road to Jerusalem as one unclean, absorbing our filth along the way until His journey ended when He was lifted up on a cross.

Follow the body of Jesus and observe what happens to Him from His birth to His death. See how the infant body of Jesus is wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger by His mother Mary (LUKE 2:7). Observe His body traveling throughout Galilee, touching lepers (MATT. 11:5) and coffins (LUKE 7:11), using His spittle to heal (JOHN 9:6), allowing a sinful woman to cause a scandal in the home of a Pharisee by washing His feet with her tears, drying them with her hair, kissing them with her lips, and anointing them with expensive oil (LUKE 7:38). Years later, six days before the Passover of His death, another woman in Bethany pours oil over His head and anoints His body in preparation for His burial (MARK 14:3–9). Even now, we remember her. Watch then what happens to the body of Jesus after He enters Jerusalem for His death — how it is beaten, scourged, pierced with nails and a spear thrust in His side (MATT. 27:28–31; JOHN 19:34). At the cross all sin, sickness and death were placed upon Him. The world grew dark and shook and was recreated.

Healing of the whole creation by the blood of Jesus came only after the Creator died. Healing only comes through pain, suffering and death. Healing comes only through the shedding of blood. Then at the ninth hour, see how His body gives up its spirit and dies.

Listen to Joseph of Arimathea, a pious Pharisee, ask Pilate for the body of Jesus and then take it down quickly from the cross, anoint it with spices, wrap it with linen cloths and then lay it in a tomb (MATT. 27:57–60). View the women who followed Jesus from Galilee go to the tomb to observe how His body was laid so that, after the Sabbath, they could bring spices and myrrh to complete the anointing of His body (MARK 16:1). Witness their shock and fear when they come to the tomb and find it empty. And then watch Peter running to the tomb, looking in and seeing only the linen cloth bands. The tomb was empty. Jesus had been raised from the dead (JOHN 20:7).

What happened to Jesus on the cross was the cleansing of all creation through His blood. What the blood of bulls and goats could not do — those millions of sacrificial animals killed in the house of God — the blood of Jesus, the Lamb of God without blemish, accomplished as He offered Himself up to His Father in the Most Holy Place as an atonement for our sins (MATT. 5:17). Jesus poured out His blood on the cross and offered up His life to His Father for the life of the world. For now all life is in His blood. We who were in bondage to sin and all its consequences are now freed by Jesus' blood. "Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins" (HEB. 9:22). As Jesus entered the Most Holy Place through His blood once for all to secure an eternal redemption, we now enter His presence as we are baptized in His name and commune at His table by eating and drinking His body and blood.



**Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.**

HEB. 9:22