

What Do “Blood of Jesus” and “Hand of God” Mean?

written by Tim Jennings, M.D. | December 18, 2009



I heard one of your podcasts where you were talking about the true meaning of the phrase “Blood of Jesus.” Could you elaborate on that and this one: “Hand of God”?

We can also find the imagery in certain stories like when God made his goodness pass before Moses and covered him with His “hand”. What is God’s hand really? Is it His providence? The Holy Spirit?

I ask this question because the Bible is filled with the imagery of being touched by God and today many people use the phrase “God touched my heart” or “so and so needs the touch of God”.

But what does that really mean?

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The Bible is full of all kinds of symbolism and imagery designed to help us understand deeper and more significant truths. But one danger of using a figure or type is when the symbol becomes the object of our attention or somehow is thought to be the endpoint of understanding. A great example is the one you mentioned, "the blood of Christ."

Within Christianity the "blood" has, in some circles, become almost sacred, mystical or magical. The blood of Christ is sometimes thought to be more than a symbol of some deeper truth. It is instead thought to be the actual healing or cleansing agent. We talk about being "cleansed by the blood," "washed in the blood," and sing songs about the "power in the blood." But, is there really power in the blood? Does blood, even the red corpuscles of Jesus, cleanse from sin?

When Jesus said, "'I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him.'" (John 6:53-56), was Jesus speaking about literal blood - about cannibalism? Of course not! There is no power in the blood. The power is in the One who shed His blood!

The blood is a symbol of the truth about God, which destroys lies and sets us free. Jesus, being God, is the source of all truth ("I am the way, the truth and the life." John 14:6). Therefore, all truth originates in Jesus. Further, the "life is in the blood" (Lev 17:11,14). Therefore the blood of Jesus also represents the life of Jesus. So the symbolism of ingesting the blood simply means we are to ingest the truth about God as revealed by Jesus which dispels lies and wins us to trust. And then in trust we are to receive the Holy Spirit and partake of the life of Christ, His perfect character so that it is no longer you and I that live, but Christ lives in us! As Peter says we actually become partakers of the divine nature. Our characters become like Jesus' but this is not accomplished by the actual "blood" of Christ, but by what His blood symbolizes - the truth about God and His perfect character.

Regarding the "hand of God," the hand is a symbol of power and action or activity. Therefore, the "hand of God" would be a symbolic way of saying God's actions or also God's active role in a circumstance or life.

The Greek word for hand is χεῖρ [cheir /khire/] and not only means the actual appendage at the end of your arm, but also can mean "the help or agency of any one, by means of any one." And when applied to God symbolizes His might, activity and power. Chiropractor, one who heals with the laying on of hands, has its root in this Greek word for hand.

Interestingly, the word for grace, as in God's grace, is closely connected to hand. It is, χάρις [charis /khar·ece/] and is translated as favor or grace. I believe God's grace is active and is more than an attitude of forgiveness or kindness or favor. Grace is God's active work to save and heal His universe. Thus the Old Testament "hand of God" and the New Testament "grace" are closely connected in meaning and communicate God's active role in ministering His healing love to His creation!