



*The Blood Bank*

*Of the Bible*

*By Pastor Don Needham*

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It is a fact that every day more than 18,000 pints of blood are transfused in the United States. With advancing medical knowledge, the demand for blood has nearly tripled in the past ten years. It is estimated that over 3 million Americans give blood each year, to meet an annual demand for 6.5 million pints. Blood may be donated every eight weeks, and some have been known to donate up to 15 gallons of blood in a lifetime without harm to their own health.

The first blood bank in the United States was established in Cook County Hospital, Chicago, in 1937. To supply an ever increasing demand, blood banks, centered especially around highly populated areas, have proliferated. If we have not ourselves given blood, most of us know a friend or relative who has.

Though collecting and storing blood has become a common occurrence, we must not overlook or forget the Eternal Blood Bank, which has been functioning for centuries, according to the Word of God. Before we explore the subject in the Bible, let us consider for a moment the supernatural fact of our own existence.

A common opinion among many Christians is that miracles occur rarely, if at all, today. I question this opinion, for I believe that our day-to-day existence is little less than miraculous. When the workings of the human body are studied and understood, the student cannot help praising the omniscience of our Creator.

"Not sickness, but health is the greatest of medical mysteries," a famous physician once remarked. Every day our bodies are assailed by billions of germs, capable of producing illness, or even death. In spite of this, we usually stay well! Countless bacteria and viruses gain entry into our body through the food we eat; the air we breathe, and through breaks in our skins. Consider how we are protected from these constant assaults.

What happens when a fleck of germ laden dust floats into our eye? The eyes are constantly bathed with a bacteria destroying antiseptic called lysozyme. It is so powerful that a single teardrop diluted with a half gallon of water can still kill a certain species of germs.

A dysentery bacteria placed on the palm of the hand will die in twenty minutes, while on a glass slide, it will survive for hours. The destruction comes as the result of special germicidal powers in the skin.

Germs entering through the mouth are attacked by chemicals in your saliva, known as leukins, lysins, and plakins. For those which survive to enter the stomach, powerful digestive juices lie in wait. Bacteria entering through the nose must pass through the maze of air filtering nasal passages. The surfaces of these passages are kept moist by a fluid which acts like flypaper in catching germs. These germs are sneezed or flushed out. If they should reach the lungs, they are caught in mucous and pushed back toward the nose and throat by millions of hair like cilia.

When germs enter through a break in the skin, where normal defensive systems do not cover openings, it would seem to be a little more serious. A germ enters the system and divides in twenty minutes. If this went unheeded, the body would be host to 1 million germs in seven hours, and to several quadrillion by the next day. Without help quickly, the body would be overwhelmed. Instead, inflammation begins and the blood's defensive system takes over. White blood cells, resembling amoeba, immediately attack invading germs, gobbling them up and destroying them by means of a fascinating and unexplainable method. Millions congregate from all over the body. Reserve systems release them and the bone marrow goes to work producing more.

When the skin is broken, a chemical called fibrinogen is responsible for clotting the opening. It also serves another purpose. It quickly solidifies a network of strands, surrounding a battlefield and trapping the infection to make sure that it does not spread.

If germs should get past these defenses, the bone marrow, liver, and spleen filter the invading particles out of the blood. Yet another defense of the blood is composed of antibodies, which circulate in the blood plasma and act as immunization against certain diseases.

One must certainly agree that the circulatory and defensive systems of the blood in the human body are little short of miraculous. Now let us consider the miracle of blood in the Scriptures.

### Blood in History

As in Christianity, blood has also played a major part in most pagan religions. It has been estimated that at the height of their culture, the Aztecs sacrificed as many as 20,000 people a year as atoning blood sacrifices. Certain islands in the South Pacific have, as part of their unique history, a record of casting people into volcanoes to appease the "bloodthirsty" gods.

The average man has about twelve pints of blood in his body. We can only speculate as to how much blood the earth has soaked up during mankind's existence upon it. This would include: the blood of millions killed in wars; that of hundreds of thousands who have been involved in blood spilling accidents on our highways; the shedding of blood resulting from the many atrocities that men have committed upon men; all add up to an enormous amount.

It has been said that there is meaning in the Russian symbol of the Red Star; each point representing a continent, and the color red indicating the blood which must be shed to conquer the world.

## **Blood in the Bible**

The subject of blood, in the Word of God, extends from Genesis to Revelation, appearing over 400 times. It is found in 42 of the 66 books. The word is first found in Genesis 4: 10, in the account of the killing of Abel by his brother Cain. It can be found, by implication, in Genesis 3:21, which relates that God slew animals to make of their skins clothing for Adam and Eve. It is last found in Revelation 19: 13, where it speaks of the clothing of Christ being dipped in blood.

Throughout the Bible, many of the best known stories include incidents in-volving blood. In the first of the ten plagues that came on Egypt, Aaron smote the river with his rod and all the waters in Egypt turned to blood. When the final plague came, the Israelites were spared a visit from the death angel because they had killed lambs and sprinkled their blood upon their doorposts.

God ordered the establishment of six cities of refuge where, if someone had accidentally shed the blood of another, he could go and live in safety.

In his pre-crucifixion prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus "sweat ... great drops of blood." Doctors have discovered this to be medically possible. When the body is under great strain, capillaries can actually burst and cause blood to ooze through perspiration glands.

Potter's Field, the cemetery purchased with Judas' betrayal money, means literally, "The Field of Blood." One of the heavenly signs which is to signal the second coming of Christ is to be the moon turning to blood (Acts 2:20).

Without question, the most important blood that was ever shed belonged to Jesus Christ. On the cross of Calvary, he shed it willingly for our salvation. Through this act, the door was opened that we might be saved. "Without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9:22b).

Arteriosclerosis is a breakdown which affects many elderly people. It is a condition brought on by a buildup of cholesterol in the arteries. This prevents the proper flow of blood throughout the body. This illness comes about when the blood can no longer do its job. Praise God that the blood of Christ will always be able to do its job by washing the stain of sin from those who accept it!

A story is told of a father who worked a railroad drawbridge. One day his young son, who was playing nearby, slipped and fell into the water below. The father knew that he could jump in and probably save his son. But by saving the boy he would allow a trainload of people to be killed because the bridge was open and a train was approaching. He chose to save others at the price of losing his son. Fictitious though this story may be, it is an excellent example of what our Heavenly Father allowed to happen to his only begotten Son. One died in order that many might live!

The blood bank of the Bible is not one at which blood may be acquired for a transfusion. It is, however, a place where blood has been freely given, to remove the guilt from sin stained souls!

**Have you come under the blood of Jesus?**