

Dear Mark,

Thank you for your topic suggestion. We like it and will use it in an upcoming program. If you e-mail us your address, we will send you a Christian Questions travel mug.

You wanted to know why God desires blood as an acceptable offering, first the blood of animals and then the blood of his own son.

The first indication that only the shedding of blood could cover sin is found in Genesis 3:21 where God made coats of animal skin for Adam and his wife. Later in Genesis 4, God accepted Abel's offering of the first-born of his flock, but rejected Cain's offering of fruits of the soil.

The Apostle Paul relates the importance of the shedding of blood and its cleansing ability to cover sin when he discusses the Law Covenant and sacrifices that took place in the tabernacle. "When Moses had proclaimed every commandment of the law to all the people, he took the blood of calves, together with water, scarlet wool and branches of hyssop and sprinkled the scroll and all the people. He said, 'This is the blood of the covenant, which God has commanded you to keep.' In the same way, he sprinkled with the blood both the tabernacle and everything used in its ceremonies. In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness." (Hebrews 9:19-22) Blood symbolizes life. "The life of the flesh is in the blood." (Leviticus 17:11) The shedding of blood implies a sacrificial or unnatural death. "And I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls. For it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." (Leviticus 17:11) Redemption under the Law could only be made by an estimated equivalent value. When sin was involved, only blood could atone, or justify. Since the penalty for sin is death, only by sacrificial death can the sinner be released from the death penalty.

The night before his crucifixion at the last supper, Jesus, describing his upcoming death stated, "This is the blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." (Matthew 26:28) The sacrificial death of bulls and goats to bring atonement between the Jews and God would no longer be needed. Those annual sacrifices could never take away sin permanently. They were only a type of a much greater sacrifice. When Jesus died on the cross, he was that sacrifice. He was the antitypical lamb whose sacrifice provided every human who has ever lived an opportunity for life and to rejoice either on a perfected earth or in the heavenly realms. Not only was His blood applied for humanity, but, because it was also spilled upon the ground, the earth was redeemed as well. By the spilling of His sacrificial blood, the earth will be brought to perfection as it is cleansed of impurities during the thousand-year reign of Christ.

We hope we have answered your question, at least in part. But there is much more to say. We hope you will check our web site for the up-coming program, "Is God Blood-Thirsty?" Thank again for your suggestion.

Sincerely,
Christian Questions Radio