

Why does God require a blood sacrifice/offering for sin?

First, we must understand that forgiveness of sins was not in the offering (sin, burnt, grain, guilt offerings...) itself. Forgiveness of sin was by God alone. Even the religious leaders in the time when Jesus walk on this earth, knew this basic truth. It is stated in the Gospel of Mark chapter 2, "When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, 'Son, your sins are forgiven.' Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, 'Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?'"

It is all by faith in God to remove our sin from us (this was the same in old testament to the new testament). And God in His love and mercy setup the sacrifice system so that we can be with and accepted by a Holy God. However, people (the Israelites and maybe some of us today) got caught up in the Law alone and thought that the Law (offering the sacrifice as a ritual) is what removed sin. That is not the case... We must not get into the thinking that it is just in keeping with a sacrifice that will forgive sin. The atonement (make amends for the wrong) of sin all hinges on God!

In Hebrews 10:1-4 states, "The **law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming**—not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. If it could, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. **But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins, because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.**"

Also in Hebrews 10:15-18 it states (in quoting Jermiah 31:33-34), "The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First he says:

'This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds.'

Then he adds:

'Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more.'

And where these [sins] have been forgiven, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin.

*It is seen here that the heart of a person following, believing and trusting God is the focus and not the sacrifice that should be offered. However, there needs to be a sacrifice in order to be made clean before God. We can never think we are clean enough to come before God. We are far from it. However, faith in God's promises and work will make us clean. For this was always God's message to his people...

"You see that his **faith and his actions were working together**, and his faith was made complete by what he did. And the scripture was fulfilled that says, '**Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness**,' and he was called God's friend." (James 2:22-24 & stated also Romans 4:1-3)

The sacrifice/offering that God required was to ultimately show:

1. There is consequence for sin... DEATH (Leviticus 4:14-15, Genesis 2:16-17 & Romans 6:23)
2. Recognize that we are not holy or not perfect. We are sinners... (Romans 3:23)
4. And recognize our need for a savior... to save us from ourselves in order to be with God. (Hebrews 10:3-10)
5. Therefore there is punishment and payment required for sin in order **to be accepted by a Holy and Just God.** (Hebrews 9:22, Leviticus 16:6-10 & 21-22 & 30, Hebrews 9:14-15)

One can read in Romans 3:23-28 this understanding of God being completely just and the one who justifies people to himself. God has to bring this justification by some way of payment for the things we do wrong (sin) or therefore God would not be just and holy. The sacrifice of Christ is the way

God can bring this justification for us (sinners) to himself. The sacrifice God setup in the law atones (pays) for sin and in Jesus Christ's sacrifice on the cross atones for every sin that one commits (past, present & future), to those who believe. God is in love with his creation and desires for them to be reunited with himself. However, there is a gap, which is our unholy and sinful lives.

This paragraph from James Denney gives a good picture of God and why there needs to be a sacrifice for sin...

"There can be no gospel unless there is such a thing as a righteousness of God for the ungodly. But just as little can there be any gospel unless the integrity of God's character be maintained. The problem of the sinful world, the problem of all religion, the problem of God in dealing with a sinful race, is how to unite these two things. The Christian answer to the problem is given by Paul in the words: 'Jesus Christ who God set forth a propitiation in His blood'" (J. Denney, *The Death of Christ*, Tyndale, 1951, p.98).

Reading Hebrews 9 & 10 in the Bible will help connect the what the law of sacrifice and offerings was for, stated in the old testament or old covenant to what Jesus Christ has done for us by the work of the cross in sacrificing himself for us, and bringing the new covenant that cleanse us from all sin if we believe in Christ's atoning work! This is the good news! God is always coming after us to bring us to himself. Reconciliation has been done through Christ Jesus (Colossians 1:19-22)!!

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