

Was Jesus Needed for Atonement?

Christianity's Claim

No one can be cleansed of sin without the blood of a sacrifice. Jesus was the final, perfect sacrifice. Only by accepting Jesus and his suffering for your sins can you atone for your sins.

And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission. (Hebrews 9:22)

For [the death] that He died, He died to sin once for all; but [the life] that He lives, He lives to God. (Romans 6:10)

Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. (Hebrews 9:12)

By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once [for all]. ... Now where there is remission of these, [there is] no longer an offering for sin. (Hebrews 10:10, 18)

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14:6)

Facts

Often Christianity will use a passage in the Torah to prove that one must have a blood sacrifice in order to receive atonement for sins.

If any person, whether of the family of Israel or a proselyte who joins them, eats any blood, I will direct My anger against the person who eats blood and cut him off [spiritually] from among his people. This is because the life-force of the flesh is in the blood; and I therefore gave it to you to be [placed] on the altar to atone for your lives. It is the blood that atones for a life... (Leviticus 17:10-11)

Notice that this passage is only used as an admonishment to the Children of Israel and the converts amongst them to not eat blood. It has nothing to do with an actual need for a sacrifice of atonement.

Verse twelve spells this idea out clearly.

...and I therefore told the Israelites, "Let none of you eat blood." A proselyte who joins you shall [likewise] not eat blood. (Leviticus 17:12)

This verse has nothing to do with a demand for a blood sacrifice in order to atone for sin.

Christianity would have you believe that every sin can be forgiven by the blood of Jesus. What Christianity fails to tell you is that the blood sacrifices spoken of in the Torah were only for unintentional sins.

God spoke to Moses with instructions to speak to the Israelites and tell them the following: [This is the law] if an individual commits an inadvertent sin by violating certain [specified] prohibitory commandments of God. (Leviticus 4:1-2)

Is blood sacrifice the only way to atone for sin in the Tanakh?

You desired neither sacrifice nor meal-offering, but furnished me with ears. You requested neither burn-offering nor sin-offering. (Psalm 40:7)

Devotion to God is better than a sacrifice and this is all that is required by God.

Then Samuel said: “Does God desire burnt-offerings and sacrifices as much as being obeyed? Obedience is better than goodly sacrifice, compliance, than fat rams.” (I Samuel 15:22)

With what can I come before God and bow before God on high? Shall I come before Him with burnt-offerings, with year-old calves? Will God be appeased with thousands of rams, with myriads of streams of oil? Shall I offer my firstborn for my sin, the fruit of my womb for the iniquity of my soul? Mortal! He told you what is good and what God demands of you – nothing more than to act justly, love kindness, and walk modestly with your God. (Micah 6:6-8)

The Lord of Hosts, God of Israel says: Add your burnt offerings to your other sacrifices, and eat the meat! For I did not speak to your ancestors or command them about burnt offerings and sacrifices when I took them out of the land of Egypt. Rather, I commanded them: Obey Me, and I will be your God and you will be My people. Carefully follow the path I commanded you, so things will go well for you. (Jeremiah 7:21-23)

Charity also atones for sin as we see throughout the Tanakh.

Riches acquired through wickedness are of no avail, but charity saves from death. (Proverbs 10:2)

Wealth is of no avail on the day of wrath, but charity saves from death. (Proverbs 11:4)

Therefore, O king, let my advice be good in your eyes: Expiate your sins with charity, and your iniquities with generosity to the poor. This will cause your prosperity to last. (Daniel 4:24)

For I desire kindness, not sacrifice. [I desire] knowledge of God rather than burnt-offerings. (Hosea 6:6)

Repentance alone can atone for sin.

Then David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against God.” “God has forgiven your trespass; you will not die,” Nathan said to him. (II Samuel 12:13)

Save me from bloodshed, O God, Lord of my salvation. Let my tongue sing joyously of Your righteousness. O God open my lips, that my mouth may declare Your praise. For You do not desire a sacrifice – or else I would give it! You do not want burnt-offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit. O God, a broken and humbled heart You do not despise. (Psalm 51:16-19)

Seek God when He may be found, and call upon Him when He is near. Let the wicked abandon his ways and the sinner his thoughts. Let him return to God, Who will have mercy on him – to our God, who is very forgiving. (Isaiah 55:6-7)

“Let anyone who knows, repent! Then God will take pity and revoke His anger, so that we won’t perish.” God saw what they [the people of Nineveh] did, that they repented from their evil ways. So God reconsidered the terrible thing He had planned for them, and He did not carry it out. (Jonah 3:9-10)

It was prophesied that words – prayer – would take the place of the sacrificial system while the Children of Israel will be in exile.

Israel will remain for a long time without king or minister, without sacrifice or sacred pillars, without breastplate or instruments of fortune-telling. Afterward, the Israelites will repent. They will seek out God their Lord and David their king. They will fear God and His goodness in the End of Days. (Hosea 3:4-5)

O Israel! Return to God your Lord, for you have stumbled because of your sin. Take words with you and return to God. Say to Him: “Forgive all sin and accept what is good. We will offer confession in place of bullocks.” (Hosea 14:2-3)

As we can see, Jesus was not the final blood sacrifice for the atonement of sin.

It was never commanded in the Tanakh that the only way to atone for sin was through blood sacrifice.

In addition, how does Christianity explain that the sacrificial system will be restored during the Messianic Age if Jesus was supposedly the final blood sacrifice?

I will bring them to My holy mount and let them rejoice in My house of prayer. Their burnt-offerings and sacrifices will be accepted favorably on My altar, for My Temple will be called a house of prayer for all the nations. (Isaiah 56:7)

Indeed, God says: Men from David’s line will never cease ruling over the House of Israel, nor will the priests and Levites cease offering burnt offerings, burning meal offerings, and sacrificing [peace] offerings before Me. (Jeremiah 33:17-18)

Every pot in Jerusalem and Judea will be sanctified to the God of Hosts. And all those who bring sacrifices will come and take from them to cook in them. On that day, there will no longer be merchants in the House of the God of Hosts. (Zechariah 14:21)

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