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Why Does God Require Sacrifice after Sin?

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#STRask - Stand to Reason

Questions about why God requires sacrifice after sin, why God had to adhere to sin's death penalty such that he had to devise a plan of substitutionary atonement, and how we're able to grieve the Holy Spirit with our sin if God doesn't see our sin.

- * Why does God require sacrifice after sin, and is Genesis 3:21 an example of this?
- * Why does sin have the power of death, and why did God have to adhere to sin's death penalty such that he had to devise a plan of substitutionary atonement?
- * If God doesn't see our sin because of the blood of Jesus, how are we still able to grieve the Holy Spirit when we sin?

Transcript

All right. Welcome to Stand to Reasons, #STRAskPodcast with Amy Hall and Greg CoEL. And this is the podcast where we answer the questions that you send on on send in on Twitter with the hashtag #STRAsk, or you can send them through our website and that's at www.STR.org, just go to our #STRAskPage and that's where you'll find the link.

You can also use carrier pigeons or paper airplanes. Yes, just be sure. Be sure to put our direction as long as it's short.

Be sure to spray paint #STRAsk on the bird and we will get the message. All right. Here's a question from Matt Davis.

How much are we to read into Genesis 3.21? Is this the first sacrifice? I'm trying to get at the logical root of understanding the question, why does God require sacrifice after sin? Well, if Genesis 3, and that would be verse, let me see. 21, the Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. If that were the first sacrifice, that wouldn't tell us why God needs it.

It would just be an example of an earliest sacrifice and subsequent sacrifices followed.

This is frequently pointed to as a typology of animal sacrifice. This is the first sacrifice video to point out.

We have to be careful of reading typology into text because it's somewhat subjective. But this does seem to be a reasonable characterization. Adam and Eve are naked, no big deal until they sin.

And then the nakedness is their awareness of nakedness is characterized as an awareness of their sin. Now they know something's wrong. Now they got to cover up.

And so God makes provision for them by taking the life of an animal, taking the skins and putting the skins around them for their first clothing. And so I don't think it's a stretch to say that this is exemplifying a pattern that we see throughout Scripture and the blood of bulls and goats being the more dramatic characterization of that that we see in the Mosaic Law. You know, it's interesting.

Obviously, it wasn't just the Jews that sacrificed. Other pagan religion sacrificed as well. And some people draw the conclusion that this is just a pagan practice and the Jews did the pagan stuff.

But there's another way to read it. And that is that people realized that something was wrong with them that they had to deal with and the way they dealt with it was by sacrificing something on their own behalf to appease the gods towards them. So it is, and I never really thought about it this way before.

It just now occurred to me that maybe there is something in the human condition, certainly an awareness of our own fallenness. That's true. And that some payment needs to be made.

I think we're aware of that too. Our feelings of, I'm trying to think of the right word now, when we feel guilty, we also feel a sense of a little bit fear that's built in because guilt entails the notion of appropriate retribution for the thing that was done wrong. All right.

And when forgiveness is experienced, the guilt, characteristically, is released emotionally because something has been resolved to dissolve the feeling of guilt, which is a true moral responsibility for something somebody has done. So the awareness of one's guilt and that a payment needs to be made seems to be a universal awareness. It's not that God just made up a system.

Okay. The only way it could be forgiven is if you kill something and here's the first dead thing in scripture that is tied to human sin and awareness of sin characterized by nakedness here. I think there is an awareness, another explanation that certainly should be in the running is this happens because when you have true moral guilt, genuine culpability, punishment is expected for that.

We expect that in our awareness. And in fact, this works itself out in all kinds of legal ways. We used to say, yes, he went to prison.

He's paying his debt to society. It was a common way that we talked about things. There seems to be this awareness that when we do wrong, we owe and we need to pay what God shows is that forgiveness is possible, but payment has to be made.

And so a substitute can be made to satisfy divine justice. Now we definitely see that pattern in the mosaic law. And I think it's not just a reflection of pagan practices.

The pagans practiced it because they understood true moral guilt and payment was necessary. They just made payment in the wrong direction, you know, to false gods and really more to manipulate false gods. This is what you have with sympathetic magic.

Sympathetic magic is like when you paint paintings on the wall of men shooting arrows and killing bison or something like that. And the idea is if you paint the picture of the man killing the bison, then you will be able to kill the bison. Okay.

So you're manipulating things by this, these cave paintings and the same thing happened in pagan religions, especially the astra, which is a the were sexual idols and they were in the high places and people would do sexual things in the presence of the astra to get the astra to reproduce the crops, another form of sympathetic magic. Notice then that these rituals and sometimes sacrifices were to manipulate and appease. But I think it's grounded some of it in the sense that true moral guilt applies to humans and that a sacrifice needs to be made to cleanse the human.

In the case of the Jews, the God of all creation who was offended by humans, sin made provision for sacrifices that actually ultimately never could solve the problem. They were temporary sops. That's a word in the book that I used in story reality that Amy didn't like, but it means, it mean, remember that? But it means that it's a, it's a, it's a, it's a momentary relief because animals cannot pay for humans.

Instead, this was looking forward typologically to the human who was more than a human and therefore capable of paying for humans in a way that satisfied God's wrath for all those humans he paid for for all time. Okay. So all of this is pointing forward.

And I think the Genesis passage in chapter three is likely a characteristic of the pattern that is to follow. The sinful awareness, nakedness is covered by the skins of an animal who died to cover the nakedness. So I think that's a, that's a fair way of looking at the passage, but to get more to the point of the question of Matt's question, the reason a sacrifice has to be made is because sin needs to be paid for guilt creates a debt.

And in fact, when language is used in the New Testament about forgiving, forgive us our debts as we forgive others because there is a debt that is accrued when someone harms or does evil towards another and the same is true, of course, with God. We are to forgive

unilaterally. God doesn't forgive unilaterally, he forgives in light of a substitutionary atonement so that the justice can actually be done.

It's not our job to do justice towards each other on an individual basis that has delegated to governments in an appropriate way, but not individuals, which is what Jesus was talking about. I think when he talked about turning the other cheek, but, but an ultimate sacrifice with regards to God and his justice doesn't need to be made. But this is the first type of that and all through the Old Testament system, we have that.

And then in Hebrews, it makes it clear that the blood of bulls and goats cannot take away sin. It has to be a human who is capable of doing that. Yeah, Hebrews is really clear about that.

The verse that came to mind to me is Hebrews 9:22. And according to the law, when they almost say all things are cleansed with blood and without shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness. Of course, that just states the fact.

It doesn't give the reason, which is what he was asking for. But I, I, I like your explanation, Greg. I just wanted to make it clear that it is the case that it does require the sacrifice.

In fact, there's another verse that talks about how if that weren't the case, then, then Jesus would not have died. That's, that's indication that it was necessary. If righteousness comes to the law, then Christ died needlessly.

Yeah. So, one thing I want to point out is that God is the giver of life. He's the essence of life.

In the, in the law, he makes a very strong distinction between things of death and things of life. And even to the point where the unclean animals, like the birds that eat the dead things, they were unclean. You weren't, you were supposed to stay away from them.

There's a, there's a separation between all things of death and all things of life. And anything that goes against God is death. Anything that is with God is life.

And so, of course, like the ultimate punishment for sin, the result of that is death. The wages of sin is death. That's another thing Roman says.

So that wouldn't be another example of a specific verse that talks about why God requires sacrifice after sin. The wages of sin, the wages of rebelling against the author of life and the giver of life is death. And so, death is required.

And like you said, Greg, for a while they did that with animals until, you know, that was the shadow of Jesus who was to come and would fulfill all that. So here's a follow up question from Vaz. Why and how does sin have the power of death? Why and how is it

possible that even God had to adhere to sin's death penalty? You sin, you die.

Romans 6:23 paraphrased. So much so that God had to devise a plan of substitutionary atonement, the death of Jesus. Well, what the question kind of presumes is that sin is some kind of outside power that by nature, exacts a certain penalty from those who do it.

And that's, I think that's a mischaracterization. Sin is in this outside thing that even God in a sense had to deal with this thing, this demand that sin makes. I think what we see in these characterizations is the expression in different ways.

And what you described just a moment ago about light and darkness, et cetera, and death and life, et cetera. I was death in life was the characterization. Light and darkness is another metaphor.

These are motifs that God uses to explain his holiness and goodness and that which is not consistent with his nature, all the sin things. And that his response in justice to those things is this, how does Alistair Begg put it? This sustained attitude, this steady disposition, I think it is, the steady disposition of anger that God has towards a violation of his purposes. So we violate God's purposes.

His character is always set against that. God's response to that is that there is death that befalls them. It isn't so much that, and the death is a description of this now, loss of life and alienation and disconnect from God.

When Adam and Eve were created to use a metaphor here, they were plugged into God. Their spirits were connected with God. When they sinned, they died.

That means they were disconnected with God. They didn't die physically immediately, but this eventually also took place. But they were disconnected.

They died spiritually. This is why they knew they were naked, okay? They could see their sin, expressed in nakedness there, and they hid themselves from God. They were disconnected, which is why we must be born again.

We are now being born again is reconnecting our spiritual selves with the Spirit of God. And we are born again. Now we are new creatures, all things have become new, all things have passed away, etc.

So you have this language of regeneration in the New Testament. Our sin separates us from God, okay? We are rebelling against God. The result of that separation is what we call death.

So it isn't like God discovers a universe that has a rule which sin causes death. And so God's got to figure out a way to counteract that cause and effect relationship. The

universe is God's.

He is not under any other rule. He is only in a certain sense ruled or governed by the dictates of his own character, which is perfectly good. And man in communion with God and spiritually connected with God when he sins and rebels against God, he becomes disconnected.

That is a condition of death. That sin brings the disconnection death and the restoration of that connection so that humans can live again must come when justice is satisfied. Justice for the crime humans committed against God is satisfied in God's eyes by an appropriate substitute, which as it turns out was God himself, who gave himself for sin.

And then that life they are reconnected and life is the consequence. And I think the key thing here, Vaz asked why did God have to adhere to sin's death penalty? And this idea that God is adhering to some law outside of himself is not the way to look at it as you pointed out, Greg. It's because God is just.

It's because of who he is. And this is the point that Romans three makes, which is that the cross was the way God forgot to be just and the justifier. So he upholds his justice at the same time that he's showing mercy and grace and love.

So both of those things come together in the cross. And that's what's happening there. It's God acting out of his nature, his justice, his grace, his mercy, his love.

All of his goodness is revealed on the cross right there. And so that's all I have to add to that. So we've got one more question Greg that you can squeeze in here.

This one comes from LSJ. If God does not see our sin because of the blood of Jesus, how are we still able to grieve the Holy Spirit who is God when we sin? Well the first statement about God not seeing our sin is obviously a figure of speech because God knows everything. He doesn't forget anything in the sense of his omniscience and knowledge.

When it says he forgets our sin as far as the east is from the west, though be reddest scarlet, should be whitest. No, these are different characterizations of how God is not holding the sin against us. All right.

So the sin debt that we talked about is resolved. Okay. However, the fact is that when we sin, it still is an offense to God.

It's just not punishing us for it if we have put our trust in the rescuer because the rescuer took the punishment himself. Okay. So the difficulty here I think is in the way that these figures of speech are used and they seem to conflict.

Well, wait a minute. How do we agree with the Holy Spirit? He doesn't even remember

that we sinned. Well, he forgets our sin in a judicial sense, but the sin is still real to him, which is why he then deals with us not as a judge, but as a father.

And this is where Hebrews 12 comes in. And after all of this explanation of the final sacrifice in chapter nine, chapter 10, chapter 11 has some things too, but those, especially nine and 10, the final sacrifice we come before the throne of grace with full confidence and everything for he who promised us faithful. Oh, that's great.

We're okay. We're safe now. But now we're children and father's discipline, children.

And that's what Hebrews 12 is talking about. Hebrews 11, the great hall of faith. And then we got this great hall of witnesses, crowd of witnesses.

So let's run with endurance the faith, the race that is set before us because Jesus is the author and perfecter. So now that we're in a process, then he says that God like a good father, disciplines every son that he receives and discipline for the moment is no fun. But afterwards, for those who've been trained by it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

So notice we shift from one, from rebellion and under God's anger and wrath according to Jesus in John three, and because of the sacrifice, perfect sacrifice, Hebrews 10, we are now able to come right into the throne of grace without fear, haven't been completely washed and cleansed. But now we're in relationship as sons and then God begins to raise us up as children, which includes his discipline for the things that we do wrong that grieve him. That sounds good, Greg.

Nothing to add. I mean, I think a lot of times we don't understand what's happening when we're united to Christ. So we're united to Christ and God now sees him in our place.

So he sees Jesus' righteousness and our sins are forgiven. But of course, God created us so that we would proclaim his excellencies. That's what 1 Peter says.

We are gathered as a people so that we can reflect God to the world and we can live in a way that honors him and reveals him to others. So of course, if we are hurting other people and we are doing things that are against God, he will be grieved by that as our father. And so that's where all those, the discipline and those things come into play.

Think of the Lord's Prayer and just going back again through Kevin Deung's wonderful treatment of that in this small booklet on the Lord's Prayer. And the kingdom come, they will be done on earth as it is in heaven. That's God's moral will.

And that starts with us individually. Those of us who are praying that prayer, it's not like the other guys got to get straight now. Not first, it's God's straighten us out.

He also said a moment ago about sins are forgiven and we have his righteousness. I was

speaking at the Orange County Rescue Mission yesterday in their chapel. It was a great time that we had there.

And when I talked about the work of the cross, I talked about sins are forgiven. But that just makes us broke. I mean, if we have all this sinned debt and somebody pays it all, okay, now we don't have any debt, but we're still broke.

Well God took another step through Jesus and that he filled our bank account. And that is where we are given his righteousness. It's counted, that's justification.

We are counted as justified and righteous in Christ because he does the two things. He pays our debts and then he fills our bank account with his righteousness. So now the Father sees us through Jesus.

Now we're children. Okay. Now it's a different kind of relationship and it's still going to get rough, but for an entirely different reason, a good reason.

Well, thank you, Greg. Thank you, Matt, Bazz and LSJ. We appreciate hearing from you.

And that's your question on Twitter with the hashtag #strask. We look forward to hearing from you. This is Amy Hall and Greg Cogle for Stand to Reason.

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