

Why is the Bible So Bloody?
[Hebrews 9:18-26](#)
Hebrews, Day 31

Therefore not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood. For when every commandment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, "This is the blood of the covenant that God commanded for you." And in the same way he sprinkled with the blood both the tent and all the vessels used in worship. Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.

Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

- Hebrews 9:18-26, ESV

I once knew a man who wanted to be a doctor, but he couldn't stand the sight of blood. Our family is watching old episodes of *Monk*, a TV show featuring a detective with OCD and anxiety. He's the most brilliant detective, but he's a germaphobe and can't stand getting dirty or having too much close contact with people.

Many people are offended by the Bible for different reasons. I used to think it was my responsibility to clear up any and all offense people might feel over the Bible, to try to get them to love it as much as I do. And while I still want to clear up confusion and misunderstanding, I've come to see that many people don't like the Bible because they don't like God, often because they resent God's position as God, a job they would rather take for themselves.

One common problem people have with the Bible is with all the blood. The Old Testament is filled with bloody sacrifices, and the New Testament writers focus a lot of attention on the blood of Jesus. So some people really want to know: Why is the Bible so bloody?

The answer goes all the way back to the opening chapters of the Bible, in the first days of humanity's presence on earth, God told Adam not to eat of the fruit of the

tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for in the day that he ate of it, he would surely die. By choosing to sin, Adam chose the death penalty for himself. As Romans 6:23 would later say, "*The wages of sin is death.*"

The Bible also says, "*The life of the flesh is in the blood*" (Leviticus 17:11). That is, God's way of carrying life to our bodies is through blood, and so blood comes to symbolize, or represent, the essence of life.

The only way to make atonement for sin in the Bible is by the shedding of blood. As Hebrews 9:11 says, "*without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.*" The bloodshed of animals never actually removed anyone's sin. It couldn't. Animals can't pay for people's sin. However, the regularly repeated bloodshed was a constant reminder of the need for forgiveness, the need for atonement. The price for sin needed to be paid. God's justice needed to be satisfied.

The requirement for bloodshed comes to an end at the cross. There, Jesus died once for all, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God. (see 1 Peter 3:18) His sacrifice was final, perfect, sufficient and satisfactory, and so He died only once. He died once and lives now forevermore, securing the salvation of His people with His shed blood and His glorious resurrection life!