

Hebrews 10:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

Analysis

'It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.' This categorical statement declares the fundamental inadequacy of animal sacrifices. They could provide ceremonial cleansing and point to Christ, but they lacked power to remove sin's guilt. Human sin requires a human substitute; voluntary sin requires a voluntary substitute. Animals could never truly satisfy divine justice for human rebellion.

Historical Context

This verse demolishes the old covenant sacrificial system's ultimate efficacy while honoring its God-ordained role as pointer to Christ. The Greek 'aphaireo' (take away) means to completely remove, which animal blood could never do.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. Why was it necessary for Christ to be human to be an adequate sacrifice for human sin?

2. How does understanding the limitations of animal sacrifices help you appreciate Christ's willing sacrifice?

Interlinear Text

ἀδύνατον	γὰρ	αἷμα	ταύρων	καὶ	τράγων
it is not possible	For	that the blood	of bulls	and	of goats
G102	G1063	G129	G5022	G2532	G5131
ἀφαιρεῖν	ἀμαρτίας				
should take away	sins				
G851	G266				

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 10:11 (Sin): And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:

1 John 3:5 (Sin): And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.

Romans 11:27 (Sin): For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

Hebrews 9:9 (Parallel theme): Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;

John 1:29 (Sin): The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

Hebrews 10:8 (Sin): Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law;

Mark 12:33 (Parallel theme): And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.

Psalms 51:16 (Parallel theme): For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering.

Hosea 14:2 (Sin): Take with you words, and turn to the LORD: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips.

Hosea 6:6 (Parallel theme): For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.