

Leviticus 1:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he shall cleave it with the wings thereof, but shall not divide it asunder: and the priest shall burn it upon the altar, upon the wood that is upon the fire: it is a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD.

Analysis

And he shall cleave it with the wings thereof, but shall not divide it asunder: and the priest shall burn it upon the altar, upon the wood that is upon the fire: it is a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD.

This verse falls within the section on **Burnt Offerings**. The burnt offering (עֹלָה, olah) represents complete consecration to God. Unlike other offerings, it was entirely consumed on the altar, symbolizing total dedication.

The Aaronic priesthood mediated between God and Israel, offering sacrifices and maintaining the tabernacle. This prefigured Christ's superior priesthood after the order of Melchizedek. The five main offerings (burnt, grain, peace, sin, and guilt) addressed different aspects of relationship with God, all fulfilled in Christ's comprehensive sacrifice.

What Leviticus portrayed through types and shadows, Christ fulfilled in reality through His incarnation, perfect life, atoning death, and resurrection.

Historical Context

The burnt offering (ֹלֶחַ, olah) represents complete consecration to God. Unlike other offerings, it was entirely consumed on the altar, symbolizing total dedication. Leviticus was given to Israel at Mount Sinai, shortly after the tabernacle's construction described in Exodus. The name 'Leviticus' (from Latin Leviticus, referring to the Levites) reflects its focus on priestly duties, though the Hebrew title Wayyiqra ('And He called') emphasizes God's initiative in revealing these laws. The first seven chapters detail the five main offerings, providing both worshiper instructions and priestly procedures. Ancient Near Eastern cultures had various sacrificial systems, but Israel's sacrificial worship was unique in its ethical foundation, monotheistic framework, and emphasis on atonement rather than appeasement. Unlike pagan rituals focused on manipulating deities, Israel's sacrifices acknowledged God's sovereignty and sought reconciliation based on His gracious provision. Ancient sacrificial texts from cultures surrounding Israel demonstrate the widespread practice of animal sacrifice, but Israel's system uniquely emphasized moral atonement over magical efficacy.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does Christ's superior priesthood, prefigured in this verse, assure you of access to God and effective intercession?
2. What does this verse teach about the costliness of true worship and dedication to God?
3. What practical steps can you take this week to apply the principles taught in this verse?

Interlinear Text

וְשָׁס ע	אֶת ו	בְּכַנְפָיו	ל א
And he shall cleave	H853	it with the wings	H3808
H8156		H3671	
יִבְדִּיל	וְהִקְטִיר	אֶת ו	הַכֹּהֵן
thereof but shall not divide it asunder	shall burn	H853	and the priest
H914	H6999		H3548
עַל	עַל	עַל	הָאֵשׁ שׁ
it upon the altar	H5921	upon the wood	H834
H4196		H6086	H5921
			that is upon the fire
			H784
עַל הַ	ה וְאֵ	אֵשׁ הַ	יֶחֱדָשׁ
it is a burnt sacrifice	H1931	an offering made by fire	savour
H5930		H801	H7381
			of a sweet
			H5207
לַיהוָה:			
unto the LORD			
H3068			

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 15:10 (Parallel theme): And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not.
