

Leviticus 1:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him.

Analysis

And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him.

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 Hebrew word **kaphar** (כַּפֵּר) means 'to cover' or 'to make atonement.' The sacrificial system provided temporary covering for sin, pointing forward to Christ's perfect, once-for-all sacrifice. 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 (**עֹלָה**, 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

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. In what ways does this verse deepen your appreciation for Christ's atoning sacrifice and the seriousness of sin?
2. What does this verse teach about the costliness of true worship and dedication to God?
3. How does this verse reveal God's character, and how should that revelation shape your relationship with Him?

Interlinear Text

בְּעֵל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ רַאשׁ עַל יָד וְיַד מִצְבָּה
And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering
H5564 H3027 H5921 H7218 H5930

עַל יְדֵי רַאשׁ עַל לְכַפֵּר וְיִגְרַאצֵּה
and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement
H7521 H0 H3722 H5921

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 29:15 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt also take one ram; and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the ram.

Exodus 29:10 (Parallel theme): And thou shalt cause a bullock to be brought before the tabernacle of the congregation: and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the bullock.

Leviticus 4:20 (Sacrifice): And he shall do with the bullock as he did with the bullock for a sin offering, so shall he do with this: and the priest shall make an atonement for them, and it shall be forgiven them.

Leviticus 4:26 (Sacrifice): And he shall burn all his fat upon the altar, as the fat of the sacrifice of peace offerings: and the priest shall make an atonement for him as concerning his sin, and it shall be forgiven him.

Leviticus 3:2 (Sacrifice): And he shall lay his hand upon the head of his offering, and kill it at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and Aaron's sons the priests shall sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about.

Leviticus 3:8 (Sacrifice): And he shall lay his hand upon the head of his offering, and kill it before the tabernacle of the congregation: and Aaron's sons shall sprinkle the blood thereof round about upon the altar.

1 John 2:2 (Parallel theme): And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Exodus 29:19 (Parallel theme): And thou shalt take the other ram; and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the ram.

Romans 12:1 (Sacrifice): I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Leviticus 4:31 (Sacrifice): And he shall take away all the fat thereof, as the fat is taken away from off the sacrifice of peace offerings; and the priest shall burn it upon the altar for a sweet savour unto the LORD; and the priest shall make an atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him.

