

Leviticus 17:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.

Analysis

For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.

This verse falls within the section on **Sanctity of Blood**. Regulations prohibiting consumption of blood and requiring proper slaughter, emphasizing blood's sacred role in atonement.

The Hebrew word kaphar (כָּפַר) 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. Leviticus 17:11 declares 'the life of the flesh is in the blood,' establishing blood's sacred role in atonement, pointing to Christ's blood shed for redemption.

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

Historical Context

Regulations prohibiting consumption of blood and requiring proper slaughter, emphasizing blood's sacred role in atonement. Chapters 17-27, often called the

'Holiness Code,' expand covenant obligations beyond ritual to encompass all of life—sexuality, economics, justice, and relationships. The repeated refrain 'I am the LORD' grounds these laws in God's character and covenant relationship with Israel. Israel received these laws while encamped at Sinai, before entering Canaan. The laws prepared them for life in the promised land, distinguishing them from Canaanite practices and establishing their identity as God's holy nation. The portable tabernacle, central to Levitical worship, accompanied them through wilderness wanderings and eventually found permanent form in Solomon's temple. 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

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

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. In what ways does this verse challenge contemporary cultural values or your personal attitudes?

Interlinear Text

כִּי	בֶּן־כֶּשֶׁת	הַבָּשָׂר	הַדָּם	הוא	וְאֲנִי	נָתַתִּי יוֹ
H3588	For the life	of the flesh	for it is the blood	H1931	H589	and I have given
	H5315	H1320	H1818			H5414
לָכֶם	עַל	הַמִּזְבֵּחַ	יִכָּפֹר:	עַל	בֶּן־כֶּשֶׁת	
H0	H5921	it to you upon the altar	that maketh an atonement	H5921	For the life	
		H4196	H3722		H5315	
כִּי	הַדָּם	הוא	בֶּן־כֶּשֶׁת	יִכָּפֹר:		
H3588	for it is the blood	H1931	For the life	that maketh an atonement		
	H1818		H5315	H3722		

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 9:22 (Blood): And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

1 John 1:7 (Blood): But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

Romans 3:25 (Blood): Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

Revelation 1:5 (Blood): And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

Mark 14:24 (Blood): And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.

Colossians 1:14 (Blood): In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

Genesis 9:4 (Blood): But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat.

Matthew 26:28 (Blood): For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

Hebrews 13:12 (Blood): Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

Ephesians 1:7 (Blood): In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

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