

Leviticus 3:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he shall lay his hand upon the head of it, and kill it before the tabernacle of the congregation: and the sons of Aaron shall sprinkle the blood thereof upon the altar round about.

Analysis

And he shall lay his hand upon the head of it, and kill it before the tabernacle of the congregation: and the sons of Aaron shall sprinkle the blood thereof upon the altar round about.

This verse falls within the section on **Peace Offerings**. The peace offering (*שְׁלָמִים*, shelamim) celebrated fellowship with God and community, with portions shared between God, priests, and worshipers.

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. 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.

The access to God's presence that Leviticus carefully regulated is now freely available through Christ's blood, tearing the veil and opening the way to God.

Historical Context

The peace offering (*שְׁלָמִים*, shelamim) celebrated fellowship with God and community, with portions shared between God, priests, and worshipers. 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. Archaeological discoveries at sites like Ugarit reveal Canaanite religious practices Israel's laws explicitly rejected, confirming the Bible's historical reliability and the distinctiveness of Israelite worship.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

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. How can you use this verse to worship God more fully, obey Him more faithfully, or love others more sacrificially?

Interlinear Text

אַתָּה	וְיִשְׁתַּחֲווּ	עַל	רַאשׁ	וְיִצְבְּמָה	בְּ
And he shall lay	his hand	upon the head	of it and kill		
H5564	H853	H3027	H5921	H7218	H853
לִפְנֵי	אֶת	מִזְבֵּחַ	וְיַעֲשֶׂה	אֶת	אַבְרָהָם
it before	the tabernacle	of the congregation	shall sprinkle	and the sons	of Aaron
H6440	H168	H4150	H2236	H1121	H175
עַל	דְּמָם	עַל	בְּמִזְבֵּחַ	סְבִיבָה:	
the blood	H5921	thereof upon the altar	H4196	H5439	
H1818					

Additional Cross-References

Leviticus 3:8 (Blood): 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.

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