

Leviticus 3:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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.

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 New Testament reveals that Christ's sacrifice accomplishes what the Levitical system could only symbolize—complete forgiveness and restoration of relationship with 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. The Israelite dietary laws in Leviticus 11 have no exact parallel in surrounding cultures, though some ancient cultures had food taboos, suggesting unique revelation rather than borrowed customs.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of 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 does this verse reveal God's character, and how should that revelation shape your relationship with Him?

Interlinear Text

וְשִׁלְطָה וְקָרְבָּן וְעַל יְדֵךְ וְיִסְמֶךְ כִּי
And he shall lay his hand upon the head of his offering and kill
H5564 H3027 H5921 H7218 H7133 H7819

בְּנֵי יִצְחָק וְמֹעֵד אֶלְעָזֶר פֶּתַח
it at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation shall sprinkle sons
H6607 H168 H4150 H2236 H1121

סְרִיבָה: כְּמִזְבֵּחַ עַל בְּזִבְחָה יְמִינָה אֶבְרָר
and Aaron's the priests the blood upon the altar round about
H175 H3548 H853 H1818 H5921 H4196 H5439

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 29:10 (Temple): 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.

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