

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

וְשָׁחַט וּ	קָרְבָּנוֹ	רֹאשׁ אֵשׁ	עַל	יָדוֹ	וְסָמָהּ
and kill	of his offering	upon the head	H5921	his hand	And he shall lay
H7819	H7133	H7218		H3027	H5564
בָּנָיו	וְזָרְקוּ	מוֹעֵד	אֶל הַל	פֶּתַח	וְשָׁחַט וּ
sons	shall sprinkle	of the congregation	of the tabernacle	it at the door	and kill
H1121	H2236	H4150	H168	H6607	
סָבִיב:	הַמִּזְבֵּחַ	עַל	הַדָּם	אֶת	הַכֹּהֲנִים
round about	upon the altar	H5921	the blood	H853	the priests
H5439	H4196		H1818		H3548
					H175

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.