

Leviticus 3:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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.

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.

Hebrews 9-10 explains how Christ's once-for-all sacrifice supersedes the repeated Levitical offerings, providing permanent cleansing from sin.

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. 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

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

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

Interlinear Text

וְשָׁמַת	קָרְבָּן	וְ	רַאשֵּׁן	עַל	יְדֹוֹ	אֶת	יָצַם	וְ
And he shall lay	his hand		upon the head		of his offering		and kill	
H5564	H853	H3027	H5921	H7218	H7133	H7819		
לִפְנֵי	אֶת	אֶת	מִזְבֵּחַ	מִזְבֵּחַ	מִזְבֵּחַ	מִזְבֵּחַ	בָּנִים	וְ
it before	the tabernacle	of the congregation	shall sprinkle	sons				
H853	H6440	H168	H4150	H2236				H1121
אֶת	אֶת	אֶת	עַל	עַל	עַל	עַל	עַל	עַל
אַבְרָהָם	the blood	the blood	the altar	the altar	the altar	the altar	the altar	the altar
and Aaron's	H853	H1818	H5921	H4196	H5439			

Additional Cross-References

Leviticus 1:5 (Blood): And he shall kill the bullock before the LORD: and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

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