

# Leviticus 17 Commentary

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<b>LEVITICUS THE BOOK OF                      SANCTIFICATION AND WORSHIP</b> Adapted and modified from <a href="#">C. Swindoll</a>	
Leviticus 1-17	Leviticus 18-27
<b>The Way to God Access</b>	<b>The Walk with God Lifestyle</b>
<b>The Approach:</b> Offerings	Practical Guidelines
<b>The Representative:</b> Priest	Chronological Observances
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<b>Ritual for Worship</b> Worshipping a Holy God	<b>Practical for Walking</b> Living a Holy Life
<b>Location:</b> Mt Sinai for one full year	
<b>Theme:</b> How sinful humanity can approach and worship a holy God	
<b>Key Verses:</b> Lev 17:11, 19:2, 20:7-8	
<b>Christ in Leviticus:</b> In every sacrifice, every ritual, every feast	
<b>Time:</b> about 1446BC	

**Leviticus 17:1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, -**

The phrase "**Jehovah spoke to Moses**" occurs 93 times in the OT =

Ex 6:10, 13, 28f; 7:8; 13:1; 14:1; 16:11; 19:21; 25:1; 30:17, 22; 31:1, 12; 32:7; 33:1; 40:1; Lev 4:1; 5:14; 6:1, 8,

19, 24; 7:22, 28; 8:1; 12:1; 13:1; 14:1; 16:1; 17:1; 18:1; 19:1; 20:1; 21:16; 22:1, 17, 26; 23:9, 23, 26, 33; 24:1, 13; 27:1; Num 1:1; 2:1; 3:5, 11, 14, 44; 4:1, 17, 21; 5:1, 5, 11; 6:1, 22; 7:4; 8:1, 5, 23; 9:1, 9; 13:1; 14:26; 15:1, 17; 16:20, 23, 36, 44; 17:1; 18:25; 19:1; 20:7, 23; 25:10, 16; 26:1, 52; 27:6; 28:1; 31:1, 25; 33:50; 34:1, 16; 35:1, 9; Deut 32:48; Josh 14:6 ("You know the word which the LORD spoke to Moses the man of God concerning you and me in Kadesh-barnea.")

**Jehovah spoke to Moses** so Moses could speak to Aaron, a good pattern for all pastors -- that Jehovah might speak to them (who function as intermediaries, mediators if you will) through His Word, that they might be able to speak to their congregation (who like Aaron are a royal priesthood of the Lord - 1Pe 2:9) a word from the Lord. **All else is futility and chaff! Give us holy "wheat" from heaven in our churches, O Lord! Amen.**

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**William MacDonald Notes on Leviticus 17** - At first these verses seem to prohibit the killing of animals without bringing them to the tabernacle as a sacrifice. But this is not the case. The Israelites were permitted to kill animals for food. What this passage forbade was the offering of sacrificial animals at any place other than the door of the tabernacle. Lev 17:1-9 forbade the offering of animals in the fields, as was done in the worship of the idol Pan.

"The Hebrew word [translated 'devils' in KJV and 'goat-demons' in ASV] is literally 'hairy ones.' In Isaiah 13:21 and Isa 34:14 it is rendered 'satyr' in the Authorized Version and 'wild-goats' in the American Standard Version. The satyr was an imaginary being, half-goat, half-man, of demon nature. In Egypt the goat-man, Pan, was worshiped, it would seem as though this word recognized the fact that these people had in Egypt probably worshiped the false god."

The eating of blood was likewise forbidden (Lev 17:10-14). The blood was for atonement, not for nourishment. "The life of the flesh is in the blood" (Lev 17:11). The principle behind atonement is life for life. Since the wages of sin is death, symbolized by the shedding of blood, so "without the shedding of blood is no remission." Forgiveness does not come because the penalty of sin is excused, but because it is transferred to a sacrifice whose lifeblood is poured out. Lev 17:11 is one of the key verses in Leviticus and should be memorized. When an animal was slaughtered, its blood was drained immediately. An animal that died accidentally was unclean if its blood was not drained right, away.

Lev 17:15 refers to a person who ignorantly ate the meat of an animal that had not been bled. Provision was made for his cleansing. But if he refused this provision, he was to be punished.

**Leviticus 17:2 "Speak to Aaron and to his sons and to all the sons of Israel and say to them, 'This is what the LORD has commanded, saying, -**

Commanded, not suggested. Too often I fear I read His Word and receive it as a good suggestion rather than a great commandment.

**Leviticus 17:3 "Any man from the house of Israel who slaughters an ox or a lamb or a goat in the camp, or who slaughters it outside the camp,**

- be of: Lev 17:8,12,13,15 that killeth an: Deut 12:5-7,11-15,20-22,26,27)

**Outside the camp** (this exact phrase 28x in 27v in NAS) - Ex 29:14; 33:7; Lev 4:12, 21-note; Lev 6:11-note.; Lev 8:17-note.; Lev 9:11; Lev 13:46-note.; Lev 16:27-note (good note by Richard Phillips).; Lev 17:3-note.; Lev 24:14, 23-note.; Nu 5:3-4; 12:14-15; 15:35-36; 19:3, 9; 31:13, 19; Dt 23:10, 12; Josh 6:23; Heb 13:11-note Heb 13:13-note. and "outside the gate" in Heb 13:12-note.

**Leviticus 17:4 and has not brought it to the doorway of the tent of meeting to present it as an offering to the LORD before the tabernacle of the LORD, bloodguiltiness is to be reckoned to that man. He has shed blood and that man shall be cut off from among his people.**

- **bringeth:** Lev 1:3 Deut 12:5,6,13,14 Eze 20:40 Joh 10:7,9 14:6
- **blood shall:** Lev 7:18 Ps 32:2 Ro 4:6 5:13,20 Philemon 1:18,19

- **he hath:** Isa 66:3 be cut off: Lev 17:10,14 18:29 20:3,16,18 Ge 17:14 Ex 12:15,19 Nu 15:30,31

**Preacher's Complete Homiletic Commentary** - A captious mind will ask. Why is not sacrifice acceptable to God wherever offered? Surely it is in the spirit of the offerer, rather than in the circumstances of the offering, that piety consists. Wherefore, then, this insistence on mere conditions, and importance attached to the place of sacrifice? But God meets such contention of thought with absolute interdict; He is the authority in human life and sacred regulations; and "who art thou that replies against God?" Even when "your ways are not my ways" (Isa 55:8), the LORD must be obeyed, and His terms of dealing with sinful creatures be observed as absolute. Yet more. There was wisdom in those requirements; for the Israelites had been so trained to superstitious and heathenish ideas in Egypt as to need this fencing about in order to restrain them from lapsing, all but unconsciously, into the snares of familiar idolatrous practices. Our God is gracious in all His ways; His commandments are not grievous; but, knowing our tendencies to err, He arrests us at the first symptoms of erring, and shows us the path of safety, the plan of acceptance. ([Preacher's Complete Homiletic Commentary - Leviticus 17 The Sanctity of Blood](#) )

**Leviticus 17:5** "The reason is so that the sons of Israel may bring their sacrifices which they were sacrificing in the open field, that they may bring them in to the LORD, at the doorway of the tent of meeting to the priest, and sacrifice them as sacrifices of peace offerings to the LORD.

- **in the open:** Ge 21:33 22:2,13 31:54 Deut 12:2 1Ki 14:23 2Ki 16:4 17:10 2Ch 28:4 Eze 20:28 22:9
- **and offer them:** Lev 3:1-17 7:11-21 Ex 24:5)

**Comment on "sacrificing in the open field"** - Israel "had learned this from the Egyptians, who peopled the scenes of nature with deities (v. 7), and Israel continually fell into this old habit, and sacrificed in groves and on high places; it was the snare of their whole after history. We may be redeemed from our spiritual bondage, and become pilgrims to Canaan, yet all the journey through the power of old habits pursues us, and would reassert itself upon us. Therefore the urgency with which God's Word prohibits any and every concession to "the former lusts in our ignorance." We must shun lurking perils." ([Preacher's Complete Homiletic Commentary - Leviticus 17 The Sanctity of Blood](#) )

**Leviticus 17:6** "The priest shall sprinkle the blood on the altar of the LORD at the doorway of the tent of meeting, and offer up the fat in smoke as a soothing aroma to the LORD.

- **sprinkle:** Lev 3:2,8,13 **burn:** Lev 3:5,11,16 4:31 Ex 29:13,18 Nu 18:17

**Leviticus 17:7** "They shall no longer sacrifice their sacrifices to the goat demons with which they play the harlot. This shall be a permanent statute to them throughout their generations."

- **sacrifices to the goat demons** Deut 32:17 2Ch 11:15 Ps 106:37 John 12:31 14:30 1Co 10:20 2Co 4:4 Eph 2:2 Rev 9:20)

This is a fascinating prohibition. Notice it does not say "shall not sacrifice" but "shall no longer sacrifice"! Implication? Clearly this was something that Israel was doing! Wow and woe! They had not been out of Egypt for very long at the time of the giving of the truth in Leviticus (about 1450-1410BC) as they camped at the base of Mt Sinai. Clearly Israel had lived in Egypt amid her idolatry long enough for the practice of idol worship to live in Israel, the holy, chosen people. My, how longsuffering is God!

**Harris** - The word שַׂיִר (**sāyîr**) is identical with the word for he-goat; but as it obviously refers to idolatry, it is translated "goat idol." Some think this points to what the Greeks called satyrs—mythical creatures in half-human, half-goat form. But the LXX translation is "vanities," a name for idols, and the word is used in 2Chronicles 11:15 clearly in a context of idolatry—with mention of Jeroboam's golden calves. As far as is known, satyrs were creatures of Greek mythology, not of Semitic idolatry. There is no hint that these idols were half-human. It is easiest to see here just an idol in goat form similar to the more common one in calf or bull form. (The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 2: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers)

**Demons** ([08163](#)) (**sa'y'r** from **sear** = hair) means shaggy or hairy ("hairy one") and can also refer to a "he goat." Some lexicons also associate it with the "goat-idol."

**Sa'yr** is translated in the **Lxx** of Lev 17:7 with the adjective **mataios** which speaks of that which is deceptive or ineffectual. It is not what it appears to be and was used in the NT to describe empty speculations (1Cor 3:20) and futile, worthless religion (James 1:26) and "vain things" (idols in contrast to the living God) (Acts 14:15).

Here is another reference to "goat demons"...

"And he (Rehoboam) set up priests of his own for the high places, for the **satyrs** (KJV = idols; NET & ESV = goat idols; CSB = goat-demons; Hebrew = sa'yr; **Lxx** = **mataios**), and for the calves which he had made."  
(2Chronicles 11:15)

**Thoralf Gilbrant** - "Most of the occurrences of **sa'yr** refer to the male goat used for the sin offering. Leviticus 4 specifies the regulations for the sin offering. A young bull without defect was to be offered by the high priest, a male goat by a leader in the community (Lev. 4:23), a female goat for a common person, a dove or pigeon by the poor and one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour by the very poor. This sacrifice served as mandatory atonement and confession for unintentional sin and provided forgiveness from sin and cleansing from defilement. The Day of Atonement signified the substitutionary role of the male goat in bearing the sins of the people, in like manner as Christ did on the cross (cf. Lev. 16; Heb. 13:11ff). The high priest was to offer two goats, one for the sin offering and the other as the scapegoat, which would be chosen by casting lots. The first goat would be slaughtered and its blood sprinkled in the holy Place and its body burned outside of the camp. The scapegoat would be released into the desert after the high priest laid his hands upon its head, confessing over the animal all the sin and rebellion of Israel (Lev. 16:21). Thus, the sin was transferred from the guilty party to the **sa'yr**, as all iniquity was transferred to Christ on the cross. On four occasions, **sa'yr** refers to "**goat idols**" or "**demons**," which were understood to be one and the same. Leviticus 17:7 reveals that Israel prostituted themselves with goat idols, which were strictly forbidden. Jeroboam ignored this prohibition, rejected the Levites and appointed his own pagan priests who set up idols bearing goat images (2Chr. 11:15). Isaiah ironically described God's judgment in which the very animals Israel worshiped would be the only ones left in the land (Isa. 13:21; 34:14)." ([The Complete Biblical Library Old and New Testament - Dictionary](#))

**Baker** - A masculine noun meaning a male goat, a buck. Occasionally, the word can be used figuratively to mean a hairy one. Under the Israelite sacrificial system, a male goat was an acceptable sin offering. This noun is used many times in conjunction with the sin offering, in which a male goat without any defects was offered by the priest to atone for the sins of himself and the people (Lev. 9:15; 2 Chr. 29:23; Ezek. 43:25). On the negative side, the Israelites worshiped the goat as an idol in times of rebellion against God; the same noun is used in these references (Lev. 17:7; 2Chr. 11:15). (The complete word study dictionary: Old Testament)

**Sa'yr** is translated in KJV - - kid 28, goat 24, devil 2, satyr 2, hairy 2, rough 1; 59**Sa'iy**r - 57v - Gen 27:11, 23; 37:31; Lev 4:23-34; 9:3, 15; 10:16; 16:5, 7-9, 15, 18, 20ff, 26f; 17:7; 23:19; Num 7:16, 22, 28, 34, 40, 46, 52, 58, 64, 70, 76, 82, 87; 15:24; 28:15, 22, 30; 29:5, 11, 16, 19, 22, 25, 28, 31, 34, 38; 2Chr 11:15; 29:23; Isa 13:21; 34:14; Ezek 43:22, 25; 45:23; Dan 8:21.

See following for discussion of **satyr**...

- [Satyr - Holman Bible Dictionary](#)
- [Satyr - Kitto's Popular Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature](#)
- [Satyrs \(Satyr\) - 1911 Encyclopedia Britannica](#)
- [Satyr - International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#)
- [Satyr - The 1901 Jewish Encyclopedia](#)

**Sacrifices to the goat demons** - The word Seirim, here translated "devils," literally means hairy or shaggy goats, and then goat-like deities, or demons. The Egyptians, and other nations of antiquity, worshipped goats as gods. Not only was there a celebrated temple in Thmuis, the capital of the Mendesian Nomos in Lower Egypt, dedicated to the goat image Pan, whom they called Mendes, and worshipped as an oracle and as the fertilising principle in nature, but they erected statues to him everywhere. Hence the Pan Silenus, satyrs, fawns, and woodland gods found among the Greeks and Romans; and hence, too, the goat-like forms of the devil, with a tail, horns, and cloven feet, which obtain in Medieval Christianity, and which may still be seen in some European cities. The terror in which the devil, appearing in this Pan-like form, created in those who were thought to have seen him, has given rise to our expression panic. (Ellicott's Commentary in [Preacher's Complete Homiletic Commentary - Leviticus 17 The Sanctity of Blood](#))

**G Campbell Morgan** - Lev. 17:7 And they shall no more sacrifice their sacrifices unto the he-goats.—This is a startling interpolation. It occurs in the midst of instructions concerning sacrifices. It is first provided that all sacrifices must be brought to the door of the Tent of Meeting. There must be no other place of worship through sacrifice. This provision recognized the fact of the unification of the nation around the Divine Presence; reminding the people that there could be no access to God on the part of any person in self-willed isolation; and so made difficult, if not impossible, the worship of false gods. It was in this connection that these words were

uttered. The Authorized Version reads: "They shall no more offer their sacrifices unto devils." Perhaps that was too strong a rendering. The Hebrew word literally is "hairy-ones." In Isa.13.21, Isa 13:34. 14 it is rendered "satyr" in the Authorized Version, and "wild-goats" in the American Standard Version. The satyr was an imaginary being, half-goat, half-man, of demon nature. In Egypt the goat-man, Pan, was worshipped. It would seem as though this word recognized the fact that these people had in Egypt probably worshipped that false god. It is but a reference, and we may not dogmatize as to the actual meaning. The one truth of value for us is that when man worships God in the right way, according to the Divine provision and law, all false worship becomes unnecessary and impossible. To be deflected from the true method, even of the worship of God, is ever to be in danger of turning to other gods. ([Life Applications from Every Chapter in the Bible](#))

**Leviticus 17:8 "Then you shall say to them, 'Any man from the house of Israel, or from the aliens who sojourn among them, who offers a burnt offering or sacrifice,**

- that offereth: Lev 17:4,10 1:2,3 Jdg 6:26 1Sa 7:9 10:8 16:2 2Sa 24:25 1Ki 18:30-38 Mal 1:11)

**Preacher's Complete Homiletic Commentary** - It was an inflexible regulation, binding upon "the house of Israel," and also upon "strangers that sojourn among you." For evil may be introduced by the society we entertain, the guests who visit us. And hospitality was to be restricted by divine laws. How ensnaring often becomes the courtesy which we think due to "strangers"! There is a tendency to relax from steadfast principles of righteousness and lofty habits of piety at such times as guests are staying in our homes. This is to lower God's standard in accommodation to men. It must not be; strangers in godly homes must conform to the godly laws which are there supreme; the children of God must never yield to unhallowed customs of their guests; hospitality must be no excuse for impiety. ([Preacher's Complete Homiletic Commentary - Leviticus 17 The Sanctity of Blood](#))

**Leviticus 17:9 and does not bring it to the doorway of the tent of meeting to offer it to the LORD, that man also shall be cut off from his people.**

- Lev 17:4

**Leviticus 17:10 'And any man from the house of Israel, or from the aliens who sojourn among them, who eats any blood, I will set My face against that person who eats blood and will cut him off from among his people.**

- **that eats:** Lev 17:11 3:17 7:26,27 19:26 Ge 9:4 Deut 12:16,23 15:23 1Sa 14:33 Eze 33:25 44:7 Ac 15:20,29 Heb 10:29
- **I will:** Lev 20:3-6 26:17 Ps 34:16 Jer 21:10 44:11 Eze 14:8 15:7

**Preacher's Complete Homiletic Commentary** - God claimed the blood as being "the life" of the creature. He has ownership in all His creatures, and we should acknowledge Him therein. But this law has emphasized the value of blood as the symbol also of atonement (v. 11). And He would have every act, even of eating and drinking, testify of the atonement required by sinners. The table could not be spread for "strangers" (v. 12), nor could any one, Israelite or stranger, seek recreation and pleasure in "hunting" even, but the significance and sacredness of "the blood" must be recognised. We have reason, indeed, to regard as most suggestive and precious the blood of atonement. It leads our thoughts to Him whose death has gathered into itself all virtue for redemption. How dreadful the consequences of counting that "blood of the covenant an unholy thing!" (Heb. 10:29). ([Preacher's Complete Homiletic Commentary - Leviticus 17 The Sanctity of Blood](#))

**Leviticus 17:11 'For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement.'**

- Lev 17:14
- have: Lev 8:15 16:11,14-19 Mt 20:28 26:28 Mk 14:24 Ro 3:25 5:9 Eph 1:7 Col 1:14,20 Heb 9:22 13:12 1Pe 1:2 1Jn 1:7 2:2 Rev 1:5

**I have given** - God gave the **blood**. This was imagery He chose to use to teach them about atonement for their soul.

Why does **blood** make atonement? Because it has to do with life. **Blood** was a picture of life. Blood represented life.

**Blood** had to be given on the altar to make atonement.

No longer sacrifice to goat demons.

No eating of blood bc it is given for atonement

Non sacrificial type animals (Lev 16:13-14) (Picture is that blood is set apart for special purpose. Don't profane it).

### **Rules for blood**

No shedding of blood of sacrificial animals apart from the Tabernacle (Lev 17:4-5)

This passage is one of the key verses of Leviticus. It is a part of that scarlet thread that runs through the whole of sacred Scripture. The principle of blood atonement is God's divinely ordained remedy for the problem of sin. The Scriptures insist that forgiveness for sin is not possible apart from the shedding of blood (Heb 9:22). The biblical emphasis upon the blood of the sacrifice, and ultimately of Christ, is indicative of the giving of the life of an innocent victim to atone for the guilty. The blood poured out emphasized the sacrificial nature of the death, together with its efficacious significance, but it was only a foreshadowing and could not take away sins (Heb10:4). It provided a covering for the time so that God might pass over their sins (Ro 3:25, Heb 9:15).

**I have given it (blood) to you on the altar.** The shedding of animal blood on an altar in sacrificial atonement (kaphar = covering) for human sin was a temporary means of showing faith in God's promised redemption (the Coming Redeemer), the "Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world" (Jn 1:29).

The substitutionary taking of the "life" (that is, the blood) of an innocent, blemish-free animal symbolized the great price of salvation, forgiveness and reconciliation that would one day be paid by the Creator Himself, becoming man and taking all our sins upon Himself.

Blood sacrifices became obsolete with Christ's death and resurrection, for He "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb 9:26) and then was "raised again for our justification" (Ro 4:25).

**Atonement** (03722)(**kaphar**) is derived from koper which means "ransom," so that kaphar means "to atone by offering a substitute." To cover, to forgive, to make amends, to pardon, to appease, to expiate (extinguish the guilt of a crime by subsequent acts of piety or worship, by which the obligation to punish the crime is canceled), to reconcile, to ransom (Isa 47:11), to remove by paying a price, to be annulled (Isa 28:18). It describes a covering over, often with blood of sacrifice, to atone for some sin. Atonement means that a price is paid and blood is shed, because life must be given for life (Lev 17:11).

The **Lxx** translates **kaphar** with **exilaskomai** (see **hilaskomai**) which means to make atonement (used in Ge 32:21, Ex 30:10, 15, 16; Ex 32:30, 1Sa 3:14, Dt 21:8, Nu 35:33) - Kittel's Theological Dictionary says that "The most striking thing about the development of the terms (**exilaskomai** and **hilaskomai**), however, is that words which were originally used to denote man's action in relation to God cease to be used in this way in the NT and are used instead of God's action in relation to man." (3:317).

### **Atonement -**

- [Atonement - American Tract Society Bible Dictionary](#)
- [Atonement - Bridgeway Bible Dictionary](#)
- [Atonement - Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#)
- [Atonement - Holman Bible Dictionary](#)
- [Atonement - Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible](#)
- [Atonement - Hastings' Dictionary of the New Testament](#)
- [Atonement \(2\) - Hastings' Dictionary of the New Testament](#)
- [Atonement - International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#)
- [Atonement - The 1901 Jewish Encyclopedia](#)

**Baker** - At its most basic level, the word conveys the notion of covering but not in the sense of merely concealing. Rather, it suggests the imposing of something to change its appearance or nature. It is therefore employed to signify the cancellation or "writing over" of a contract (Isa. 28:18); the appeasing of anger (Gen. 32:20[21]; Pr. 16:14); and the overlaying of wood with pitch so as to make it waterproof (Gen. 6:14). The word also communicates God's covering of sin. Persons made reconciliation with God for their sins by imposing something that would appease the offended party (in this case the Lord) and cover the sinners with righteousness (Ex. 32:30; Ezek. 45:17; cf. Da 9:24). In the OT, the blood of sacrifices was most notably imposed (Ex. 30:10). By this

imposition, sin was purged (Ps 79:9; Isa. 6:7) and forgiven (Ps. 78:38). The offenses were removed, leaving the sinners clothed in righteousness (cf. Zech. 3:3, 4). Of course, the imposition of the blood of bulls and of goats could never fully cover our sin (see Heb. 10:4), but with the coming of Christ and the imposition of His shed blood, a perfect atone ([Complete Word Study Dictionary- Old Testament](#))

**Vine** - Most uses of the word, however, involve the theological meaning of “covering over,” often with the blood of a sacrifice, in order to atone for some sin. It is not clear whether this means that the “covering over” hides the sin from God’s sight or implies that the sin is wiped away in this process. As might be expected, this word occurs more frequently in the Book of Leviticus than in any other book, since Leviticus deals with the ritual sacrifices that were made to atone for sin. For example, Lev. 4:13-21 gives instructions for bringing a young bull to the tent of meeting for a sin offering. After the elders laid their hands on the bull (to transfer the people’s sin to the bull), the bull was killed. The priest then brought some of the blood of the bull into the tent of meeting and sprinkled it seven times before the veil. Some of the blood was put on the horns of the altar and the rest of the blood was poured at the base of the altar of burnt offering. The fat of the bull was then burned on the altar. The bull itself was to be burned outside the camp. By means of this ritual, “the priest shall make an atonement [kaphar] for them, and it shall be forgiven them” (Lev. 4:20). The term “atonement” is found at least 16 times in Lev. 16, the great chapter concerning the Day of Atonement. Before anything else, the high priest had to “make atonement” for himself and his house by offering a bull as a sin offering. After lots were cast upon the two goats, one was sent away into the wilderness as an atonement (v. 10), while the other was sacrificed and its blood sprinkled on the mercy seat as an atonement for the people (vv. 15-20). The Day of Atonement was celebrated only once a year. Only on this day could the high priest enter the holy of holies of the tabernacle or temple on behalf of the people of Israel and make atonement for them. Sometimes atonement for sin was made apart from or without blood offerings. During his vision-call experience, Isaiah’s lips were touched with a coal of fire taken from the altar by one of the seraphim. With that, he was told, “Thy sin is purged [kaphar]” (Isa. 6:7). The English versions translate the word variously as “purged” (kjb, jb); “forgiven” (rsv, nasb, tev); and “wiped away” (neb). In another passage, Scripture says that the guilt or iniquity of Israel would be “purged” (kjb, neb) by the destruction of the implements of idolatrous worship (Isa. 27:9). In this case, the rsv renders kaphar as “expiated,” while the nasb and tev translate it as “forgiven.”

**John Stott** -We strongly reject, therefore, every explanation of the death of Christ which does not have at its center the principle of ‘satisfaction through substitution,’ indeed divine self-satisfaction through divine self-substitution.”

**Scotfield** - Hebrew kaphar means to propitiate, to atone for sin. According to Scripture the sacrifice of the law only covered the offerer's sin and secured the divine forgiveness.

In Genesis 6:14 kaphar describes the coat or cover of the ark with tar or pitch.

**Kaphar** - 94v - **NAS** - appease(1), appease\*(1), atone(3), atoned(2), atonement is made(1), atonement shall be made(1), atonement was made(1), atoning(1), canceled(1), expiation can be made(1), forgave(1), forgive(4), forgiven(5), made atonement(3), make atonement(71), makes atonement(2), making atonement(1), pardon(1). Gen 6:14; 32:20; Exod 29:33, 36f; 30:10, 15f; 32:30; Lev 1:4; 4:20, 26, 31, 35; 5:6, 10, 13, 16, 18; 6:7, 30; 7:7; 8:15, 34; 9:7; 10:17; 12:7f; 14:18ff, 29, 31, 53; 15:15, 30; 16:6, 10f, 16ff, 20, 24, 27, 30, 32ff; 17:11; 19:22; 23:28; Num 5:8; 6:11; 8:12, 19, 21; 15:25, 28; 16:46f; 25:13; 28:22, 30; 29:5; 31:50; 35:33; Deut 21:8; 32:43; 1 Sam 3:14; 2 Sam 21:3; 1 Chr 6:49; 2 Chr 29:24; 30:18; Neh 10:33; Ps 65:3; 78:38; 79:9; Prov 16:6, 14; Isa 6:7; 22:14; 27:9; 28:18; 47:11; Jer 18:23; Ezek 16:63; 43:20, 26; 45:15, 17, 20; Dan 9:24.

**F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily** - Leviticus 17:11 The life of the flesh is in the blood.

There is probably a deeper truth in these words than man has ever fathomed. The R. V. marg. translates “life,” soul. Why that reverence for blood; that horror when it is unrighteously shed and gurgles forth; that perpetual reference of Scripture to the blood of Christ? Probably the answer to such questions would be given, if we perfectly understood the affirmation of this remarkable verse.

When Jesus gave his blood, He gave his life, the life of his holy soul. — We are accustomed often to speak about the blood of Christ, by which we mean the life of Jesus, shed forth for us substitutionally and sacrificially. The sinner takes this blood, this life, in his hands, and presents it to God as his plea. Does the broken law require satisfaction, homage, acknowledgment? Here it is in this priceless, pure, and sinless blood, never infected by pollution, never heated by passion. Let this shed life atone for thee! “God be propitious (because of the sacrifice on the altar) to me the sinner.”

Five bleeding wounds He bears,  
Received on Calvary;  
They pour effectual prayers,  
They strongly plead for me  
“Forgive him, oh, forgive,” they cry,  
“Nor let that ransomed sinner die.”

When we are bidden drink his blood, it is of his life that we partake. — At the table of our Lord we symbolically drink of his blood; in doing this we identify ourselves with his death, and give up our self-life to the cross. Yea, we do more; we testify our desire to receive into our natures more and more of the soul and life of our Blessed Lord, so that we may dwell in Him, and He in us.

#### **Norman Geisler - LEVITICUS 17:11–12—Does this passage prohibit having a blood transfusion?**

**MISINTERPRETATION:** Leviticus 17:11–12 says, “For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement. Therefore I said to the sons of Israel, ‘No person among you may eat blood, nor may any alien who sojourns among you eat blood’ ” (NKJV). Jehovah’s Witnesses believe this is another verse that prohibits blood transfusions (Reasoning from the Scriptures, 1989, 70).

**CORRECTING THE MISINTERPRETATION:** The prohibition here is primarily directed at eating flesh that was still pulsating with life because the lifeblood was still in it. The transfusion of blood does not involve eating flesh with the lifeblood still in it. Hence, blood transfusions do not violate Leviticus 17. ([When Cultists Ask- A Popular Handbook on Cultic Misinterpretations](#))

**Rob Morgan** - Leviticus 17:11 (is) one of the great but little-known verses in the Bible. It says: For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul. - The first part of the verse says that the life of the flesh is in the blood. Let me illustrate it this way: Municipal areas require well-organized delivery and defense systems. Almost every part of a city requires supplies, such as water, food, dry goods, and factory orders on a constant basis. These supplies must be delivered through a transportation system consisting of thousands of trucks with access to every part of the city through a complex of freeways, highways, streets, and alleys. The trucks transport supplies along city streets to stores and homes, while other trucks remove waste and allow the city to function and thrive. Our bodies also have a transportation system so complex and complete that it dwarfs that of a metropolis. The body’s transportation system cuts through every tissue and organ by means of a network of 60,000 miles of blood vessels. No cell of your body lies more than a hair’s breadth from a blood capillary. The center of this vast system is a pump the size of an apple or a fist, that pumps 2,000 gallons of blood through its chambers every day, sending blood to every part of the body. The blood carries vital, life-giving oxygen and nutrients to every cell in the body. We have two kinds of blood cells—red ones and white ones. The white blood cells are like billions of little tanks protecting the body from invading diseases. There are five different kinds of these white blood cells, and each one is trained to go after a different enemy. One drop of blood can contain anywhere from 7000 to 25,000 white blood cells, and the number of them increases when our body is fighting an illness, just like the government calling up the reserves. The body’s 25 trillion red blood cells, meanwhile, are like little UPS trucks carrying all sorts of packages (such as oxygen) that are needed by the cells in the body. Every cell in the body requires oxygen to remain alive. If the blood is cut off to any part of the body, it deprives that part of the body of oxygen, and that bodily part will die. If the brain is deprived of oxygen, the brain dies and thus the body dies. The blood is the essence of life. Someone called it “the River of Life.” Thirty-five hundred years ago, God told us, “The life is in the blood.” Leviticus 17:11 says: For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul. In other words, in the moral and spiritual laws of this universe, God stipulated that the blood of an innocent lamb could atone for sin. When Jesus Christ began his ministry, he was introduced by John the Baptist, not as the Prince of Peace or the Messiah of Old. He was introduced as the “Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.” The Passover Lamb of Exodus 12 was a prophetic, divinely-appointed foreshadowing, a type, of the coming Christ. And when Jesus Christ died, the life-giving blood drained from his body, providing forgiveness and life to all who believe. (From [Meeting God At Midnight](#))

#### **A M Hodgkin ([Christ in All the Scriptures - Contents](#))**

The Book of Leviticus repeats even more emphatically than Genesis the meaning of the blood, it is life. "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 atonement by reason of the life... For as to the life of all flesh, the blood thereof is all one with the life thereof." (Lev 17:11,14, RV]

We need to realize the vital importance of the blood of Christ: it is the foundation of everything. A study of the following verses will show us something of the power of the blood.

The Precious Blood of Christ (1Pet 1:18,19) --

The Meaning of the Blood, Lev 17:11,14

Redemption through the Blood, 1Pet 1:18,19

Forgiveness through the Blood, Eph 1:7

Justification through the Blood, Rom 5:9

Peace through the Blood, Col 1:20



Cleansing through the Blood, 1Joh 1:7

Loosing from Sin through the Blood, Rev 1:5, RV

Sanctification through the Blood, Heb 13:12

Access through the Blood, Heb 10:19

Victory through the Blood, Rev 12:11

Glory everlasting through the Blood, Rev 7:14,15

**Leviticus 17:12 "Therefore I said to the sons of Israel, 'No person among you may eat blood, nor may any alien who sojourns among you eat blood.'**

- neither: Ex 12:49

**Leviticus 17:13 "So when any man from the sons of Israel, or from the aliens who sojourn among them, in hunting catches a beast or a bird which may be eaten, he shall pour out its blood and cover it with earth.**

- which hunteth: Lev 7:26 hunteth: Heb. hunteth any hunting pour out: Deut 12:16,24 15:23 1Sa 14:32-34 Job 16:18 Eze 24:7

**Leviticus 17:14 "For as for the life of all flesh, its blood is identified with its life. Therefore I said to the sons of Israel, 'You are not to eat the blood of any flesh, for the life of all flesh is its blood; whoever eats it shall be cut off.'**

- Lev 17:11,12 Ge 9:4 Deut 12:23

**LIFE IN THE BLOOD** The statement that "the life of the flesh is in the blood" had stood in the Mosaic Scriptures for 3,600 years before philosophers, scientists and anatomists had found their way to this physical truism. That the blood holds the vitality of the entire bodily structure is given here as a fact of revelation; and it lay in the Bible for nearly 4,000 years before anatomists discovered the fact by their research. Now it is acknowledged as a principle confirmed by elaborate and accurate experiments. ([Preacher's Complete Homiletic Commentary - Leviticus 17 The Sanctity of Blood](#) )

**QUESTION - [What does it mean that the blood is the life \(Deuteronomy 12:23\)?](#)**

**ANSWER** - Long before modern science proved that blood carries the essential elements of life throughout the body, God instructed the Israelites, "Be sure you do not eat the blood, because the blood is the life, and you must not eat the life with the meat. You must not eat the blood; pour it out on the ground like water" (Deuteronomy 12:23–24). Why did God command the Israelites not to [eat meat with the blood still in it](#)? Several reasons exist, and a combination of these most likely explains the prohibition.

Today we know for a fact that "blood is the life." No other natural ingredient or man-made material can replace blood as the means of sustaining life. To the ancient Israelites, blood was the emblem of life and equivalent to life itself. As the fluid of life, the blood of animals belonged to God, the giver of life: "But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it" (Genesis 9:4; see also Genesis 2:7; Job 33:4; Psalm 139:13). Blood was never to be consumed as common food; when a sacrifice was offered, the blood was drained and offered to God on the altar (Leviticus 17:14).

Looking at the question from a purely practical standpoint, God may have been concerned with the physical well-being of the Israelites when He said, "Do not eat the blood, because the blood is the life." We now know that many diseases are potentially contained in the blood and can be transmitted throughout the body and to other people. Certain meats, if not cooked thoroughly, can cause illness if consumed. So a secondary reason God may have forbidden the eating of meat with the blood still in it may have

been to promote good health.

In Deuteronomy 12, God began teaching the Israelites about the covenant governing His relationship with them. He zeroed in on worship with detailed stipulations about how His people ought to love, honor, and glorify the Lord their God. The worship of Yahweh, the one true God, was to be distinct and set apart from the worship of pagan deities and idols.

Among ancient pagan cultic rituals was the practice of drinking the blood of sacrificed animals—and even the blood of human sacrifices. Some pagan tribes consumed their victims' blood because they believed it possessed their enemies' might and power. So the Lord's command not to eat meat with the blood in it would have been to set God's people wholly apart from these godless, idolatrous, and atrocious customs. In the early church, believers were also encouraged to avoid such pagan associations: "Write and tell them to abstain from eating food offered to idols, from sexual immorality, from eating the meat of strangled animals, and from consuming blood. For these laws of Moses have been preached in Jewish synagogues in every city on every Sabbath for many generations" (Acts 15:20–21, NLT)

In Leviticus 17:10–12, we learn that blood was God's ordained means of atonement: "I will set my face against any Israelite or any foreigner residing among them who eats blood, and I will cut them off from the people. For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life. Therefore I say to the Israelites, 'None of you may eat blood, nor may any foreigner residing among you eat blood.'"

Blood represented the life of the animal. When the blood was spilled, the animal's life was terminated. Sacrificing an animal's life in place of one's own life satisfied God's price or payment for sin. The spilled blood of the guiltless substitute animal offered on the altar served as payment for the people's sins (Leviticus 16:15). Thus, the shedding of blood was an act of atonement.

Blood as the symbol of life had to be treated with honor. The Israelites were forbidden to eat meat with the blood still in it because consuming blood would have violated or denigrated the sacred act of atonement by which humans are made right with God. Consuming the blood would have disregarded its divinely ordained purpose. Instead, the people were to bring each animal to the tabernacle entrance for the priest to offer to God on the altar.

This Old Testament act of atonement pointed forward to the shedding of Jesus Christ's blood on the cross for the forgiveness of sins: "Just think how much more the blood of Christ will purify our consciences from sinful deeds so that we can worship the living God. For by the power of the eternal Spirit, Christ offered himself to God as a perfect sacrifice for our sins" (Hebrews 9:14, NLT; see also Hebrews 10:1–18). Each time an animal was sacrificed on the altar and its blood poured out, it communicated a picture of the Savior. Jesus Christ suffered in our place. His blood is the life that was given so that we might have eternal life.

Jesus told His disciples, "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you cannot have eternal life within you. But anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise that person at the last day" (John 6:53–54, NLT). Considering the law against eating blood, the thought of consuming Christ's flesh and drinking His blood would have been shocking to His followers. Jesus' statement certainly got their attention. But Jesus wasn't speaking literally; He was talking about His work of redemption (see John 6:32–35, 41, 47–58).

Believers in Jesus Christ are cleansed, forgiven, made right with God, and freed from the power of sin through the shed blood of the spotless Lamb of God: "For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood" (Romans 3:25, NLT; see also 1 John 1:7; 5:11; Ephesians 1:7). Christ's blood is truly "the life" for those who believe in Him and receive His life. [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

**Leviticus 17:15 "When any person eats an animal which dies or is torn by beasts, whether he is a native or an alien, he shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and remain unclean until evening; then he will become clean."**

- every soul: Lev 22:8 Ex 22:31 Deut 14:21 Eze 4:14 44:31
- that which died of itself: Heb. a carcass both wash: Lev 11:25 15:5,10,21 Nu 19:8,19,21 Rev 7:14

**Leviticus 17:16 "But if he does not wash them or bathe his body, then he shall bear his guilt."**

- Lev 5:1 7:18 19:8 20:17,19,20 Nu 19:19,20 Isa 53:11 John 13:8 Heb 9:28 1Pe 2:24

