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Leviticus 17

(2019)

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Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Leviticus 17.

THE FOCUS: ALL SACRIFICES MUST BE BROUGHT TO THE TABERNACLE

Topics.

- Whoever kills an animal must bring it to the entrance of the tabernacle.
 - So, the people no longer sacrifice in open fields, but at the tabernacle.
 - They shall no longer sacrifice to goat demons, who they whore after.
 - All who do not offer sacrifice at the tabernacle shall be cut off.
 - God will set His face against whoever eats blood and cut them off.
 - Cover the blood with earth, and whoever eats it shall be cut off.
 - Whoever eats what dies and does not wash shall bear their iniquity.
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INTRODUCTION: the book of Leviticus is about ceremonial rules and civil laws that God gave to Moses after He had given him the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai.

- These are the statutes and rules and laws that the LORD made between him and the people of Israel through Moses on Mount Sinai. (Lev. 26:46).

Either on Mount Sinai or when he met with him in the Tabernacle (also called the tent of meeting) when they were in the wilderness near the Mountain. Moses was to give these ceremonial laws to the Levitical priesthood, they embrace rules concerning sacrifices, offerings and worship; the ordination of Aaron and his sons and their ceremonial cleanness; the Day of Atonement; feasts and holy days and the Year of Jubilee. The civil and social laws and laws of justice he was to give to the government of Israel to implement within their society. The ceremonial and civil laws were not given to the secular world but are laws God gave to the nation of Israel. The central message is that God is holy and requires His people to be holy. The book also shows that God graciously provides atonement for sin through the shedding of blood. Most Jews and Christians recognise Moses as the author, writing sometime after the giving of the Law (about 1445 B.C.).

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NOTE: for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

The previous chapter: covers atonement for Aaron and himself, for his household, for the holy place, for the brazen altar and for the people. The chapter ends with the statement: The Day of Atonement is a Sabbath Day once every year, forever.

LEVITICUS 17:1-4

Whoever Kills an Animal Must Bring it to the Tabernacle Entrance.

- **Leviticus 17:1-4:** And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ²"Speak to Aaron and his sons and to all the people of Israel and say to them, This is the thing that the LORD has commanded. ³If any one of the house of Israel kills an ox or a lamb or a goat in the camp,

or kills it outside the camp, ⁴and does not bring it to the entrance of the tent of meeting to offer it as a gift to the LORD in front of the tabernacle of the LORD, bloodguilt shall be imputed to that man. He has shed blood, and that man shall be cut off from among his people.

Bring it to the entrance of the tabernacle: (v4) to the place where the sacrifices are killed, if they did not offer the animal as a peace offering to the LORD at the tabernacle they were to be regarded as wantonly shedding blood and evicted from among the LORDs people. (This principal also applies to all other offerings). All that was killed by the Israelites for peace offerings were to be presented before the entrance of the tabernacle, which was near to where the brazen altar of burnt offering stood and the flesh (meat) was returned to the person who offered it to be eaten as a peace-offering feast according to the law.

This command was appointed:

1. Since history shows that the Israelites had a strong addictedness to idolatry, these laws would have been set in place partly to cut off all occasions of idolatry and prevent the Israelites from adopting the idolatrous habits of the Egyptians and other idolatrous nations, that commonly sacrificed to idols or devils in temples, fields, their homes and various other places.
 - So, they shall no more sacrifice their sacrifices to goat demons, after whom they whore. This shall be a statute forever for them throughout their generations. (Leviticus. 17:7).
2. To stop the people's usurpation of the priest's office and prevent private men from taking on the role of the priest's office in their own homes, as it would have been very easy for self-appointed priests to kill an animal and sacrifice it privately to a favourite object of worship and form his own congregation.
3. To prevent individuals foolishly sacrificing to other gods in the open fields as the nation's surrounding them did.
4. To establish Israel as a unique nation that worshipped only one God, so that they would be a testimony to the true God of all creation to the surrounding pagan nations who worshipped many gods.

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The tabernacle and later the temple were both types of the church, and as such the sacrifices pointed forward to the final Sacrifice for all the world, the Lamb of God without blemish.

- When Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) ¹²he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. (Heb. 9:11-12).

God is free to dispense with his own law: though men were tied to this law, God is free to dispense with his own law when circumstance required it, which he did sometimes as the following verses show.

When the Philistines came against Israel at Mizpah:

- Samuel took a nursing lamb and offered it as a whole burnt offering to the LORD. And Samuel cried out to the LORD for Israel, and the LORD answered him. ¹⁰As Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to attack Israel. But the LORD thundered with a mighty sound that day against the Philistines and threw them into confusion, and they were routed before Israel. (1 Sam. 7:9-10).

When Israel made Saul king at Gilgal:

- Then Samuel said to the people, "Come, let us go to Gilgal and there renew the kingdom."
¹⁵So all the people went to Gilgal, and there they made Saul king before the LORD in Gilgal. There they sacrificed peace offerings before the LORD, and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly. (1 Sam. 11:14-15).

When David offered a burnt and a peace offering on Mount Moriah:

a man named Araunah offered to give David his threshing floor to build an altar to the LORD so that a plague would be averted from the people:

- But king David said to Araunah, "No, but I will buy it from you for a price. I will not offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God that cost me nothing." So David bought the threshing floor (on Mount Moriah) and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.²⁵ And David built there an altar to the LORD and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the LORD responded to the plea for the land, and the plague was averted from Israel. (2 Sam. 24:21-25).

When Elijah destroyed the 450 prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel:

Elijah built an altar of twelve stones according to the number of the tribes and cut a bull into pieces and laid it on the wood (1 Kings 18:31-37), then at the time of offering the evening sacrifice.

Elijah prayed and:

- Fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust and licked up the water that was in the trench. (1 Kings 18:38).

When the people saw it, they fell on their faces and said, "The LORD, he is God" and Elijah brought the false prophets down to the brook Kishon and slaughtered them there. (1 Kings 18:39-40). These verses show that:

- When Samuel offered a lamb at Mizpah as a burnt offering the LORD blessed him. (1 Samuel 7:9-10).
- When Israel sacrificed peace offerings before the LORD, at Gilgal, Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly. (1 Sam. 11:14-15).
- When David offered a burnt and a peace offering on Mount Moriah the LORD stopped a plague (2 Sam. 24:21-25) clearly showing He accepted the two offerings.
- When Elijah cut a bull into pieces and (1 Kings 18:31-37) offered it on Mount Carmel for a sacrifice the LORD consumed it by fire (1 Kings 18:38-40), clearly showing He accepted it.

The following verses show that a day will come when God's people will worship Him in all places:

- For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name will be great among the nations, and in every place incense will be offered to my name, and a pure offering. For my name will be great among the nations, says the LORD of hosts. (Malachi 1:11).
- Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. (John 4:21).
- God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth. (John 4:24).

God accepts no sacrifices today, except those that are offered by faith through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Bloodguilt shall be imputed to that man (blood shall be imputed to him in KJV): (v4), bloodguilt means the person has incurred guilt in shedding blood in an unlawful manner. Blood here comes from the Hebrew word (*dam*) and refers to literal blood (as that which when shed causes death) of man or an animal. In this context it carries the idea of being guilty of ceremonially shedding blood unlawfully.

Cut off: amongst commentators there are two different thoughts concerning the punishment for violating these laws, some strongly believe whoever wilfully violated these laws was to be put to death, while others believe they were to be excommunicated from the people of Israel, which raises the question, which is true? Searching the entire chapter, we find nothing that specifically says they would be put to death, but it is mentioned three times that they were to be cut off from the people (i.e., the nation of Israel) (v4, 9, 14).

The expression, "shall be cut off," in Hebrew comes from the word (*karath*) and means cut off, cut down, cast asunder, and by implication to destroy or consume the following verses show that the expression, "shall be cut off," means shall be put to death.

- The person who does anything with a high hand, whether he is native or a sojourner, reviles the LORD, and that person shall be cut off from among his people. ³¹Because he has despised the word of the LORD and has broken his commandment, that person shall be utterly cut off; his iniquity shall be on him." ³²While the people of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering sticks on the Sabbath day. ³³And those who found him gathering sticks brought him to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation. ³⁴They put him in custody, because it had not been made clear what should be done to him. ³⁵And the LORD said to Moses, "The man shall be put to death; all the congregation shall stone him with stones outside the camp." ³⁶And all the congregation brought him outside the camp and stoned him to death with stones, as the LORD commanded Moses. (Numbers 15:30-36).

These verses clearly show that the expression, "to be cut off from the people," is a Jewish idiom for "to be put to death by stoning at the hand of the people or by capital punishment at the hand of a civil magistrate."

In conclusion: it should be highlighted here that before the death penalty could be applied there had to be two or three witnesses that clearly saw what happened. For this reason, many believe the death penalty was probably not applied as often as we might think it would be, especially since finding two or three witnesses that saw people in many sins would be difficult (i.e. catching someone in the act of adultery).

- On the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses the one who is to die shall be put to death; a person shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness. (Deut. 17:6).
- If anyone kills a person, the murderer shall be put to death on the evidence of witnesses. But no person shall be put to death on the testimony of one witness. (Num. 35:30).
- A single witness shall not suffice against a person for any crime or for any wrong in connection with any offense that he has committed. Only on the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses shall a charge be established. (Deut. 19:15).
- This is the third time I am coming to you. Every charge must be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. (2 Cor. 13:1).
- But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. (Matt. 18:16).

LEVITICUS 17:5-6

So, People No Longer Sacrifice in Fields, but at the Tabernacle.

- **Leviticus 17:5-6:** This is to the end that the people of Israel may bring their sacrifices that they sacrifice in the open field, that they may bring them to the LORD, to the priest at the entrance of the tent of meeting, and sacrifice them as sacrifices of peace offerings to the LORD. ⁶And the priest shall throw the blood on the altar of the LORD at the entrance of the tent of meeting and burn the fat for a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

Before the building of the tabernacle the Israelites were in the habit of offering their sacrifices in the open field, which was lawful for them to do, but it is now unlawful for they are now forbidden to do so. However, sometimes the LORD overrode this law as the following shows:

- When Samuel offered a lamb at Mizpah as a burnt offering the LORD blessed him (1 Sam. 7:9-10).
- When Israel sacrificed peace offerings before the LORD, at Gilgal, Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly (1 Sam. 11:14-15).

- When David offered a burnt and a peace offering on Mount Moriah the LORD stopped a plaque (2 Sam. 24:21-25) clearly showing He accepted the two offerings.
- When Elijah cut a bull into pieces (1 Kings 18:31-37) and offered it on Mount Carmel for a sacrifice the LORD consumed it by fire (1 Kings 18:38-40), clearly showing He accepted it.

For further detail concerning these verses see the title: "God is Free to Dispense with His Own Law," following (v1-4) (above).

History shows: that Israel eventually began to sacrifice to heathen deities in the open field again. Amongst commentators there are two different views concerning the animals the Israelites were to bring to the entrance of the tabernacle, some believe it only refers to animals they intend to offer as a sacrifice, while others believe it applies to all animals they kill. The following looks at both these views.

1. Those who believe it only applies to animals intended to be offered for sacrifice reason that the entrance of the tent of meeting would be far too small an area for a population of more than 600,000 people to offer every animal killed for a family's daily food and therefore must refer to sacrifices only.
2. Those who believe it applies to every animal the Israelites killed, say that the ancient Israelites, like the modern Orientals, especially the nomadic tribes, ate very little meat apart from the seasons of sacrifice, which were occasions of feasting. They say that there were plenty of other animals they could eat for meat such as male and female deer's, pigeons, turtles and doves etc., which formed an essential part of the Israelites daily diet. For the command only includes oxen, lambs and goats (v3) and these three had to be less than two years old and were to have no external defect, which means anything over two years or defected and all the animals and birds could be daily eaten without being taken to the tabernacle and sacrificed.

Deuteronomy chapter twelve gives us further information concerning the sacrifices and animals Israel was to eat for food after they crossed the Jordan River and entered the land of Canaan. (Deut. 12:11).

- They were to bring to the place the LORD chooses (ultimately Jerusalem), to make His name dwell there (v11) all their burnt offerings, sacrifices, tithes, contributions and vow offerings. (v12).
- They were not to offer their burnt offerings at any place they chose (v13), but only the place the LORD chose. (v14).
- They could slaughter and eat meat within any of their towns, as much as they desired (v15), but were not to eat blood. (v16).
- They were not to eat within their towns the tithe of their grain offering, their wine, their oil, the firstborn of their herd or flock, their vow offerings their freewill offerings or the contribution that they intended to present to the LORD. (v17) but were to eat all these before the LORD in the place that He chose (v18).
- When the LORD enlarged their territory and the place the LORD chose was too far from them they could kill any of their herd or their flock and eat meat within their towns whenever they desired, but they were to take the holy things, their vow offerings, their burnt offerings and their sacrifices to the place the LORD choose. (v20-27).

Added to these Deuteronomy chapter fourteen tells us that: Israel was to bring the tithe of their grain, their wine, their oil and the firstborn of their herd and flock to the place the LORD chooses to make His name dwell there and eat it, before the LORD their God, in the place that he will choose. (v22-23). If the way was too long for them, so that they were not able to carry the tithe, then they were to turn it into money and go to the place that the LORD chooses and spend the money however they desire

and to purchase whatever their appetite craved and rejoice and eat it before the LORD. (v24-26). The principal underlying all these verses is that if a thing was commanded or intended voluntarily to be sacrificed or offered to the LORD, it was to be taken to the place the LORD chose to put His name and killed and eaten there, anything else could be killed and eaten at any place the people chose. This means that all Israel's religious practises would be at Jerusalem (the place God chose).

The idea for this was:

1. To keep idolatry from the chosen nation.
2. To bring the people of Israel together for a time of worship and rejoicing before the LORD.
3. To prevent the people of Israel setting up their own religious ceremonies and adopting pagan practises, idols and gods, which history shows they eventually did.
4. To remind the people that the lives of all inferior creatures is to be valued.
5. To develop a habit in the people of thanksgiving for their daily food.
6. To acknowledge that the animal belonged to the LORD and those who ate its meat received it back again as a gift from the LORD.
 - God created foods to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. ⁴For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, ⁵for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer. (1 Timothy 4:3-5).

Sacrifice them as sacrifices of peace offerings to the LORD: (v5) though only peace offerings are mentioned here, they include all other offerings and sacrifices. A peace offering is basically a sacrifice offered to the LORD and then eaten as a feast in the company of others. The animal would be killed at the entrance of the tent of meeting, offered to the LORD on the brazen altar of burnt offerings and then eaten in the company of all others gathered for the feast. The most likely reason peace offerings are mentioned is because they are the most frequent, and most enjoyable for the people.

LEVITICUS 17:7

They shall Not Sacrifice to Goat Demons, who they Whore After.

- **Leviticus 17:7:** So they shall no more sacrifice their sacrifices to goat demons (devils in KJV), after whom they whore. This shall be a statute forever for them throughout their generations.

The word devil here comes from the Hebrew word (*sa`iyr and sa`ar*). *Sa`iyr* means shaggy, hairy and rough and refers to a male goat, while the word, *sa`ar*, means to be horribly afraid, to fear, to hurl as a storm, to be tempestuous and to take away as with a whirlwind. By extension, it carries the idea of goat-like deities, or demons. The early Egyptians, and other ancient nations, worshipped goats as gods of which the most famous two were:

1. The goat-image Pan, called Mendes, and worshipped as the oracle, and as the fertilising principle in nature.
2. The temple in Thmuis, the capital of the Mendesian Nomos in Lower Egypt was dedicated to Pan and statues of Pan in goat-like form of the devil, with a tail, horns, and cloven feet were erected everywhere, they were commonly seen in medieval Christianity, and can still be seen in some European cities today.

From this idolatrous form of worship came, Silenus, satyrs, fauns, and the woodland gods worshipped among the Greeks and Romans. The expression: "and they shall no more offer their sacrifices to goat demons," (v7) shows that the Israelites were already in the habit of dedicating their sacrifices to these pagan deities. The following verses clearly show that the Jews adopted the pagan practises of Egypt in the wilderness and amongst various other heathen nations:

- Did you bring to me sacrifices and offerings during the forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel? ²⁶You shall take up Sikkuth your king, and Kiyyun your star-god—your images that you made for yourselves. (Amos 5:25-26).
- Now therefore fear the LORD and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness (truth in KJV). Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. (Josh. 24:14).
- I said to them, Cast away the detestable (abominations in KJV) things your eyes feast on, every one of you, and do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt; I am the LORD your God. (Ezek. 20:7).
- They played the whore in Egypt; they played the whore in their youth; there their breasts were pressed and their virgin bosoms handled. (Ezek. 23:3).
- He appointed his own priests for the high places and for the goat idols (devils in KJV) and for the calves that he had made. (2 Chron. 11:15).

They did not directly worship devils, but worshipping idols is the same as worshipping devils for the devil is the author of idolatry and is served and honoured by the worship of idols. The Egyptians were notorious for their idolatry, and the Israelites were infected with their religious practises as the following shows.

After whom they have gone a whoring: (v7) idolatry, in God's people, is commonly termed whoredom in Scripture, because it is a violation of the covenant that they entered-into with God, by which they were uniquely betrothed or married to God and as His betrothed they were to only have one God unlike the pagans who had many gods. For Israel to worship other gods is the same as a husband having an affair with another woman, it is an act of betrayal, this, is why Israel in Scripture is spoken of as playing the whore. The following shows that idolatry, especially in God's people, is commonly called whoredom and harlotry in Scripture.

- You (the inhabitants of Jerusalem) took some of your garments and made for yourself colorful shrines, and on them played the whore (harlot in KJV). The like has never been, nor ever shall be. (Ezekiel 16:16).
- You (the inhabitants of Jerusalem) also played the whore with the Egyptians, your lustful neighbors, multiplying your whoring (whoredoms in KJV), to provoke me to anger. (Ezekiel 16:26).
- She (Israel signified by the statement, Oholah is Samaria) (v4) did not give up her whoring (whoredoms in KJV) that she had begun in Egypt; for in her youth men had lain with her and handled her virgin bosom and poured out their whoring lust upon her. (Ezekiel 23:8).
- Yet she (Oholibah signifying Jerusalem) (v4) increased her whoring (whoredoms in KJV), remembering the days of her youth, when she played the whore in the land of Egypt (Ezekiel 23:19).

Israel was justly likened to practising whores and harlots, because it is a violation of that covenant by which they were uniquely betrothed or married to God.

- I will make for them a covenant on that day with the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the creeping things of the ground. And I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land, and I will make you lie down in safety. ¹⁹And I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy. ²⁰I will betroth you to me in faithfulness. And you shall know the LORD. (Hosea 2:18-20)

Idolatry is also likened to whoredom because faith toward God and His covenant is broken.

- Not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. (Jer. 31:32).

They shall no more sacrifice to goat demons (devils in KJV): (v7)
The word devil in the original is "the shaggy goat," but is sometimes used to denote an object of pagan worship or a demon dwelling in the deserts.

- Wild animals will lie down there, and their houses will be full of howling creatures; there ostriches will dwell, and there wild goats (satyrs in KJV) (sa`iyr in Hebrew) will dance. (Isaiah 13:21).
- Wild animals shall meet with hyenas; the wild goat (satyrs in KJV) (sa`iyr in Hebrew) shall cry to his fellow; indeed, there the night bird settles and finds for herself a resting place. (Isaiah 34:14).

Goat in all these verses come from the Hebrew word (*sa`iyr*), meaning *shaggy*, and refers to a male *goat*; by analogy a devil, hairy goat, satyr. It carries the following ideas, to be horribly afraid, to hurl as a tempestuous, storm and to come like or take away as a whirlwind. The expression, they shall no more offer their sacrifices to devils, after who they have gone a whoring (v7) denotes their having worshipped goat-like demons, with idolatrous pagan rites extremely abominable before the LORD. The Israelites were led into this snare while they dwelt in Egypt where the worship of goat like demons prevailed. The following verses show that the Israelites were infected with the idolatry of the Egyptians.

- Now therefore fear the LORD and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. (Joshua. 24:14).
- I said to them, cast away the detestable things your eyes feast on, every one of you, and do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt; I am the LORD your God. (Ezek. 20:7).
- Son of man, there were two women, the daughters of one mother. ³They played the whore in Egypt; they played the whore in their youth; there their breasts were pressed and their virgin bosoms handled. (Ezek. 23:2-3).

The name devil is commonly given in Scripture to idols, even to those that seemed innocent, such as to Jeroboam's calves.

- He (Jeroboam) appointed his own priests for the high places and for the goat idols (the devils in KJV), and for the calves that he had made. (2 Chron. 11:15).

Jeroboam and the people while sacrificing to these two golden calves professed to be worshiping the true God. The following verses show that worshippers of idols are in many places of Scripture spoken of as being worshippers of devils.

- They sacrificed to demons (devils in KJV) that were no gods, to gods they had never known, to new gods that had come recently, whom your fathers had never dreaded. (Deut. 32:17).
- They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons (devils in KJV). (Psalm 106:37).
- No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons (devils in KJV) and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons (devils in KJV). (1 Cor. 10:20).
- The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands nor give up worshiping demons (devils in KJV) and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk. (Rev. 9:20).

This shall be a statute forever throughout their generations: (v7)
referring to sacrificing to demons, devils or any other so-called god. This law applies to Old and New Testament believers alike for it is the first law of the Ten Commandments.

- You shall have no other gods before me. (Exod. 20:3).

LEVITICUS 17:8-9

All who do Not offer Sacrifice at the Tabernacle shall be Cut Off.

- **Leviticus 17:8-9:** "And you shall say to them, Anyone of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who sojourn among them, who offers a burnt offering or sacrifice ⁹and does not bring it to the entrance of the tent of meeting to offer it to the LORD, that man shall be cut off from his people.

The strangers who sojourn among them refers to the proselytes dwelling with them meaning, a person who had converted from their own religion to the Jewish religion and submitted to all their rituals, civil laws and enjoy their blessings.

Anyone of the house of Israel: (v8) (whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel in KJV) this, expression is used four times in one short section (v3, 8, 10, 13). The law as laid out in these verses requires that all sacrifices should be presented in the appointed sanctuary, which was the center of Israel's national unity. These laws abolished Israel's liberty to sacrifice as they pleased which they had prior to these laws. Before the construction of the tabernacle it was patriarchal practice for the head of every family to be his own priest and offer up sacrifices wherever and whenever he liked. In contrast to this liberty, "The Commonwealth of Israel," was now to acknowledge one altar, one high priest, and one sanctuary. This law was binding not only upon the Israelite by race, but also upon strangers who took up their abode and joined the Jewish community.

He shall be cut off from his people: (v9) for information concerning the expression, "cut off" see the title: "Cut Off" following (v4) (above).

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LEVITICUS 17:10-12

God will Set His Face Against Whoever Eats Blood.

- **Leviticus 17:10-12:** "If any one of the house of Israel or of the strangers who sojourn among them eats any blood, I will set my face against that person who eats blood and will cut him off from among his people. ¹¹For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life. ¹²Therefore I have said to the people of Israel, no person among you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger who sojourns among you eat blood.

The life of the flesh is in the blood: (v11) the reason why blood must not be eaten is because it is the principle of vitality of all life, human and animal. The life force in animal's and in mankind is the same. Even though the blood is the power that sustains life it is neutral. A person in a coma cannot think, speak; hear etc., yet they are alive, for life is not dependent upon these things, the life force in a human or an animal is the same, it is just that humans are given a brain that can reason and think whereas animals cannot. This is why blood and life can be used interchangeably used in the Scriptures.

David in the following verse uses blood for life:

- What profit is there in my death (in my blood in the KJV) (Psalm 30:9).

I have given the blood for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls: (v11) because it is the principle of life, therefore God has ordained it to be offered upon the altar as an expiation for the life of the person offering it. The blood of the sacrifice is its life and as such represents the life of the person offering the sacrifice. For this reason, God has appointed blood to be the substitute for the sinner's life. The life

of the sacrifice was given to preserve the life of the person offering it and save them from eternal death that their sins dwelling within and those that are manifested outwardly deserved. To highlight the principal, "the life of the sacrifice atones for the life of the person offering it the apostle Paul wrote:

- Under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. (Heb. 9:22).

The true blood that makes atonement is the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is by his blood that atonement is truly made. Some may think that Christ blood cleanses only those who are saved after Christ's death and resurrection, but this is not so the power of Christ's cleansing blood flows back to the foundation of the earth so that the faithful of the Old and New Testament are saved by the same Saviour and Redeemer. In the book of Revelation, it is written:

- All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Rev. 13:8).

And Peter wrote:

- You were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot foreordained before the foundation of the world and manifest in these last times for you. (1 Peter 1:18-20).

These verses shine a brilliant spotlight on the truth that Jesus was not only the central focus of God's eternal mind and of His eternal plans and purposes for mankind's salvation and for eternity, but also the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. The cleansing power of Jesus blood shed on the cross of Calvary doesn't just cover and cleanse only those who have come to the Lord after his death and resurrection, but flows all the way back to the foundations of the earth to Adam and Eve like a spiritual invisible river cleansing all the faithful of the Old Testament from the fall of Adam onward who by faith looked to the appearing of the promised Messiah the Christ. This shines a glorious spotlight on the truth that whether a man or woman is of the Old or New Testament we are all saved by the same cleansing power, the same cleansing blood and the same Deliverer, King and Saviour. This is because God in his eternal mind planned and purposed before time began that His Son the Lord Jesus Christ would be the Saviour of all mankind for all eternity. Truly, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. (Heb. 9:22). The writer of Hebrews makes it very clear that it is not the blood of animals, but the blood of Christ that atones.

- He entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. (Heb. 9:12).

Life depends upon the blood, it is preserved and nourished by it; the blood is the first that lives, and the last that dies; it is the primary seat of life, from it the motion and pulsation of life flow and life is spread throughout the body and is extinguished when the blood is gone; likewise, salvation is preserved and nourished by faith in the blood of Christ to cleanse from all sin, and extinguished when faith in his blood to cleanse is gone.

LEVITICUS 17:13-14

Cover the Blood with Earth and Whoever Eats it shall be Cut Off.

- **Leviticus 17:13-14:** "Any one also of the people of Israel, or of the strangers who sojourn among them, who takes in hunting any beast or bird that may be eaten shall pour out its blood and cover it with earth. ¹⁴For the life of every creature is its blood: its blood is its life. Therefore I have said to the people of Israel, You shall not eat the blood of any creature, for the life of every creature is its blood. Whoever eats it shall be cut off. (Leviticus 17:14).

You shall not eat the blood: (v14) this is a confirmation of the law against eating blood previously mentioned, but this law was ceremonial, and is now no longer in force, for the coming of the fulfilment does away with the shadow. Today the blood of Christ is the only blood that ransoms a sinner and has power to wash a sinner clean from the pollution of sin. Though God desires that we treat all animals in a humanin manner their blood no longer has any value before Him concerning pardon, forgiveness and atonement therefore there is no the reason for abstaining from eating their blood as there was in the Old Testament.

Eating blood today: there are proponents today who claim that a blood type diet can help burn fat more efficiently; increase energy levels; stimulate the immune system; promote weight loss and lower the risk of major health problems like heart disease and cancer. However, there's is a lack of scientific evidence to support such claims. It may be safe for a healthy human to drink blood in small amounts, assuming the blood is disease-free, but human blood is rich in iron, and our bodies have a hard time getting rid of excess iron, so if a person drank more than they need they would be at risk of iron overload. Should a person choose such a diet today solely for perceived health reasons it would certainly not disqualify them from God's forgiveness, pardon and atonement, since the blood of animals have no value concerning atonement, redemption and salvation before God today.

Pour out its blood and cover it with earth: (v13): following are three reasons for this command:

1. Show respect to the animal.
2. It is said by some that it was customary for heathen huntsmen to offer the blood of their prey to the god of the hunt, the LORD's command to pour it on the ground and bury it with earth prevents the Israelites from adopting this practice.
3. To prevent the spread of flies and disease.

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Whoever eats it shall be cut off: (14) in verse ten the LORD says, "If any one of the houses of Israel eats blood, the LORD will set His face against that person who eats blood and He will cut him off from among his people. (v10). Some commentators believe this simply means that they will be cut off from their people, meaning cast out of the camp, while others believe it means that they will be put to death.

To discover which is correct see the title: Cut off, following (v1-4) (above).

LEVITICUS 17:15-16

Whoever Eats what Dies shall Bear their Iniquity.

- Leviticus 17:15-16: And every person who eats what dies of itself or what is torn by beasts, whether he is a native or a sojourner, shall wash his clothes and bathe himself in water and be unclean until the evening; then he shall be clean. ¹⁶But if he does not wash them or bathe his flesh, he shall bear his iniquity."

The law, "he shall bear his iniquity," (v16) appears to be grounded on the fact that the body of an animal killed by a wild beast, or which has died of itself, still retains a great portion of its blood, it carries the following two ideas:

1. Those who eat blood have violated the law of God and bring guilt upon themselves.
2. Those who eat blood bring judgement and punishment upon themselves according to the law, either by the hand of God, or the civil magistrate.

Every person who eats what dies of itself: (v15) the following verses highlight the importance given to this law during Israel's time in the wilderness:

- You shall be consecrated to me, therefore you shall not eat any flesh that is torn by beasts in the field; you shall throw it to the dogs. (Exod. 22:31).
- The fat of an animal that dies of itself and the fat of one that is torn by beasts may be put to any other use, but on no account shall you eat it. (Lev. 7:24).

The following verses highlight the importance given to this law in later times:

- The people pounced on the spoil and took sheep and oxen and calves and slaughtered them on the ground. And the people ate them with the blood. ³³Then they told Saul, "Behold, the people are sinning against the LORD by eating with the blood." And he said, "You have dealt treacherously; roll a great stone to me here." ³⁴And Saul said, "Disperse yourselves among the people and say to them, 'Let every man bring his ox or his sheep and slaughter them here and eat, and do not sin against the LORD by eating with the blood.' " So every one of the people brought his ox with him that night and they slaughtered them there. ³⁵And Saul built an altar to the LORD; it was the first altar that he built to the LORD. (1 Sam. 14:32-35).
- Then I (Elijah) said, "Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I have never defiled myself. From my youth up till now I have never eaten what died of itself or was torn by beasts, nor has tainted meat come into my mouth." (Ezek. 4:14).
- The priests shall not eat of anything, whether bird or beast, that has died of itself or is torn by wild animals. (Ezek. 44:31).

And still more in the apostolic decision regarding "things strangled," which are intentionally connected with blood:

- Therefore my (James) judgment is that we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God, ²⁰but should write to them to abstain from the things polluted by idols, and from sexual immorality, and from what has been strangled, and from blood. ²¹For from ancient generations Moses has had in every city those who proclaim him, for he is read every Sabbath in the synagogues." (Acts 15:19-21).

In every city, Jews in their synagogues every Sabbath, were constantly reading the Old Testament command, "not to eat blood," in these same cities Gentiles were being converted to the Christian faith. James understanding that new Jewish converts would need some time to learn that their ceremonial law had ceased to be binding and therefore to avoid needlessly grieving these new Jewish converts and avoid aggravating those Jews that were hostile toward the Christian faith and turn them even further against the Gentile converts, James was of the opinion that the wise thing to do was to teach the Gentile Christians to abstain from things strangled, and from eating blood. It should be noted here that this was the opinion of James and a matter of pursuing the way of peace and that new Gentile converts would cause no needless offence it was better that they should abstain from eating blood than to give offence to the Jewish community. This principal is laid out in the following verses:

- If anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will he not be encouraged, if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols? ¹¹And so by your knowledge this weak person is destroyed, the brother for whom Christ died. ¹²Thus, sinning against your brothers and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. ¹³Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble. (1 Cor. 8:10-13)

from ancient generations the law not to eat blood had been strongly established amongst the Jewish community and therefore at the time of the apostles was well known throughout all Israel, and for this reason James considered it wise to advise the Gentile Christians not to eat blood to protect the conscience of new Jewish converts. For Gentile Christians not to eat blood was showing respect toward new Jewish converts and protecting their feelings for them to see a Gentile Christian eating blood

would be shocking. For the sake of oneness between Jewish and Gentile Christians James advice is to avoid anything that could cause another in Christ to stumble in their faith. To follow the advice of James is to follow the path and the way of love. It should be highlighted here that whether one eats blood or abstains from eating blood it does not affect the salvation of those who are saved by faith in Christ, since all are saved by grace and not by works of the law.

Be unclean until the evening: (v15) meaning from the moment of discovering their fault until the evening.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

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