

Leviticus 17 | Sunday June 22, 2025

Anybody who has spent time with a young child knows you will be asked why a lot. It seems to be their favorite question. It is amazing how hard it is to answer at times. There are so many things that we do out of habit, or according to a tradition and we do not really know why. I am amazed at the care and intention God went through to explain His plan for salvation. **He took time to explain the why.** He even developed a special group of people and gave them specific instructions so everything in their society would explain who He was and how He would provide a solution for sin. Providing salvation and it being available to all even the gentiles was not an afterthought for God.

Ephesians 3:11-12 ESV

(11) This was according **to the eternal purpose that He has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord,**

(12) in whom we have boldness and **access with confidence through our faith in Him.**

It was God's eternal purpose to provide humanity a way to be saved and reunited to Him. This was not just meant for Israel, but for all and it is found in Jesus. God realized, **accomplished, brought it about,** through Jesus. The past two weeks we have studied the Day of Atonement and seen how it served as a yearly reminder of the need for a blood payment for sin. Jesus is the blood payment. His righteous life enabled Him to offer the payment of His blood which paid for all sin. Then in chapter 17 God gives Israel more reminders of how important blood is, and explains why it is so important.

Leviticus 17:1-16 ESV

(1) 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. (3) If 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, (4) and 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. (5) 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. (6) And 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. (7) 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. (8) "And you shall say to them, Any one of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who sojourn among them, who offers a burnt offering or sacrifice (9) and 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. (10) "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. (11) For 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. (12) Therefore 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. (13) "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. (14) For 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. (15) 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. (16) But if he does not wash them or bathe his flesh, he shall bear his iniquity.”

One thing that we have to keep in mind throughout Leviticus is that Israel is not in the promise land yet. There are commands God will give that specifically apply to life in the promised land. For instance giving the firstfruits of the harvest only applies in the promised land because they are not planting crops in the wilderness. In this chapter God gives some commands that **are specific to their time in the wilderness.**

Leviticus 17:3-6 ESV

(3) If 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,**

(4) and 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.

(5) **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.

(6) And 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.

This command effectively makes killing an ox, lamb, or goat **for food only prohibited.** If one of these animals is killed its needs to be presented to the Lord at the tabernacle **as a peace offering.** The person would fully give the animal to God, the blood was presented and the fat was burnt on the altar, then the majority of the animal was given back to the person to enjoy in a fellowship meal. God was not demanding all the meat of the animal instead He wanted to invite Israel to share in a fellowship meal with Him.

This command meant **any ox, lamb, or goat that was killed needed to be used in worship.** When Israel left Egypt they took with them **“very much livestock, both flocks and herds”** Ex 12:38, yet these animals were not the staple food for the wilderness. To feed each person in Israel **4 ounces** of meat a day, assuming **2.4 million people,** you would need **600,000** pounds of meat a day. The people of Israel would have ran out of animals quickly if they used them for food. Instead God was providing daily manna for the Israelites. God could have provided for them in so many ways but He chose a system that would **require a daily reliance on Him.** Each day they had to go out and collect manna that rained from the sky, except on the Sabbath. **God wanted them to be reminded of His provision.** The manna stopped as they entered into the promised land. In Deuteronomy God gives the updated law for killing ox, lambs, and goats in the promised land.

Deuteronomy 12:1; 15; 21; 23-24 ESV

(1) “These are the statutes and rules that you shall be careful to do **in the land** that the LORD, the God of your fathers, has given you to possess, all the days that you live on the

earth.

(15) “However, **you may slaughter and eat meat within any of your towns, as much as you desire, according to the blessing of the LORD your God that He has given you.** The unclean and the clean may eat of it, as of the gazelle and as of the deer.

(21) If the place that the LORD your God will choose to put His name there is too far from you, then you may kill any of your herd or your flock, which the LORD has given you, **as I have commanded you, and you may eat within your towns whenever you desire.**

(23) Only be sure that **you do not eat the blood**, for the blood is the life, and **you shall not eat the life with the flesh.**

(24) You shall not eat it; **you shall pour it out on the earth like water.**

Once Isreal was living in the promised land, **then they could enjoy God’s abundance and blessings on them.** They were allowed to eat meat whenever they wanted. The animal did not have to be presented at the tabernacle. Special care was to be taken to bleed the animal out correctly and not eat blood. The Israelites still needed to go to the temple for burnt offerings, and tithe offerings, **but not for every animal that was killed.** Having to present every ox, lamb or goat was only for the wilderness. Practically this command helped ration the herds. Yet this command was not just practical **God was retraining His people from some terrible habits they learned in Egypt.**

Leviticus 17:7-9 ESV

(7) **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.

(8) “And you shall say to them, Any one of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who sojourn among them, who offers a burnt offering or sacrifice

(9) **and 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.**

This word is different than the scapegoat we studied last week. This was a goat demon that Israel would worship out in the wilderness. These verses make more sense when we understand the culture and worship of the Egyptians that lived near Israel. Israel had settled into the land of Goshen (Gen 47:27) which was in the Nile Delta region. In this same region was **the city of Mendes.** The Greek historian Herodotus tells us this about that city *“the Egyptians of whom I have spoken sacrifice no goats, male or female: the Mendesians reckon Pan among the eight gods [...] the image of Pan is made with the head and the legs of a goat, [...]They] **consider all goats sacred, the male even more than the female, and goatherds are held in special estimation: one he-goat is most sacred of all; when he dies, it is ordained that there should be great mourning in all the Mendesian district.**”* Egypt was worshipping a demon, who they represented as a goat man. This symbolism has continued and is why some depictions of Satan use a goat head. This worship was vile, and the sad part is that the Egyptians had influenced God’s people. Isreal was worshipping this demon in the wilderness and unfortunately it continued even into the promised land.

2 Chronicles 11:14-15 ESV

(14) For the Levites left their common lands and their holdings and came to Judah and Jerusalem, because **Jeroboam** and his sons cast them out from serving as priests of the LORD,

(15) and **he appointed his own priests** for the high places and **for the goat idols** and

for the calves that he had made.

Jeroboam appointed priests and made high places for the goat demon. God desired to stop all this all the way back in the wilderness. If an animal can only be killed if it is presented in the tabernacle it is hard to worship a goat demon in the wilderness. This shows an important principal in scripture.

1 Corinthians 15:33-34 ESV

(33) Do not be deceived: **“Bad company ruins good morals.”**

(34) Wake up from your drunken stupor, as is right, and **do not go on sinning.** For some have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame.

Israel had kept bad company in Egypt and let the current thinking of the day influence them. It led to twisted thinking, and preferring to worship a demon instead of the life giving true God. The world and its thinking will rub off on us if we are not careful. Worldly thinking is more infectious and harder to get rid of than we realize.

James 4:4-5 ESV

(4) **You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God?** Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

(5) Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, **“He yearns jealously over the spirit that He has made to dwell in us”?**

This language is tough to hear. We become an adulterer and cheat on God when we let the world influence us. We enjoy spending time with our friends, often we think alike, and value similar things. When we start thinking like the world we become hostile to God and His truth. God does not take this lightly. He **has a strong desire, longs for** a deep walk with us through His Spirit. He wants to teach us how to walk with Him and not be friendly with the world.

Romans 13:11-14 ESV

(11) Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed.

(12) The night is far gone; the day is at hand. **So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.**

(13) Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy.

(14) But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and **make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.**

As a believer we have a choice of where we will walk. We can walk in the darkness and become friendly with the world and it will cost us dearly. As a believer we can choose to walk in the armor of the light. We are called to walk in God’s truth and make no provision, **thoughtful planning, forethought,** for the flesh. As they had become influenced by the world Israel would put lots of effort and planning in being able to worship this goat demon. We are not to feed our flesh and are not to give it any opportunity to influence us. We are called to walk in the light of God’s truth.

Psalms 119:105 ESV

(105) **Your word** is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

God's truth found in His Word illuminates the darkness and guides us to a deeper walk with Him. He wants to use His truth to help us have a transformed minds and not walk like the world. In part this is why He wanted all ox, lambs and goats to be presented to Him. So that His people would walk in His truth and not the darkness of the world. His commands also served as a reminder of what they were to value.

Leviticus 17:10-12 ESV

(10) "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.**

(11) **For 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.**

(12) Therefore 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.

God forbade Israel from eating any blood. They had to be careful to bleed out an animal correctly before they ate it. Disobeying carries a harsh punishment, God will set His face against the person, and cut them off from Israel. **The person who ate blood was not just unclean until the evening but to be divinely judged.** God explains the reason why blood is so important. The life of the animal is found and represented by the blood. **This is why the blood is to be presented on the altar before God, it is a presentation of a sacrificed life.** God very clearly explains that it is the blood that makes atonement, because of the life that had been given. This summarizes everything we saw in the Day of Atonement. God wanted His people to respect blood, as a reminder of the blood payment that was needed for sin. This command goes all the way back to Noah.

Genesis 9:3-4 ESV

(3) Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, **I give you everything.**

(4) But you shall not eat flesh **with its life, that is, its blood.**

God's eternal purpose was realized through Jesus and it was to be accomplished through His blood. So even before Israel existed, and there was no tabernacle man was to respect blood. Even in the early church James encouraged believers to refrain from eating blood (Acts 15:20). Paul is clear in Romans 14:14 that all food is clean. As the church we see the reality these commands pointed to. We are to value the blood of Jesus and all He accomplished.

Hebrews 10:19-29 ESV

(19) Therefore, brothers, **since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus,** (20) by the new and living way that He opened for us through the curtain, that is, **through His flesh,** (21) and since we have a great priest over the house of God, (22) **let us draw near** with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. (23) **Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.** (24) And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, (25) not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, **but encouraging one another,** and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. (26) **For if we go on sinning**

deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, (27) but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. (28) Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. (29) How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has **trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace?**

We are to value the blood of Jesus that has given us access to the holy place, direct access to God. We have the ability to draw close. We have been made clean through Him. We are to hold on to this hope, **because He is faithful.** His blood accomplished it. Then the author gives us examples of how to draw close, we are to encourage each other to love and good works. We are to build up the body of Christ. **We are not to take our access to God lightly.**

If we continue willfully sinning, we are rejecting what the blood of Jesus accomplished. **The blood freed us from our bondage to sin and yet we choose to go back to our sin.** The blood is sufficient yet we are denying what it accomplished through our actions. As believers we will be disciplined. We are not to profane the blood that sanctified us. This is not about losing salvation, that is impossible (Eph 1:13-14). **Profane means to treat as common or ordinary.** When we walk in our sin we are treating the blood of Jesus as an ordinary thing. Lets value the blood of Jesus and live in a worshipful response for all He has done! As believers we can continually start fresh with Him.

1 John 1:9 ESV

(9) If we confess our sins, **He is faithful** and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
