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Leviticus 17:11 and the Theology of Sacrifice

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Exegetical Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Sacred Theology

by

Robert Andrew Dafydd Clancy
September 1990

Approved by: Paul Schrieber
Advisor

Charles Arand
Reader

To my wife, Meg

מצא אשה מצא טוב
ויפק רצון מיהוה

--Prov. 18:22

PREFACE

This thesis is the temporary culmination of work which has been spread out over four years of seminary and two more years of graduate study. But in reality, it has been being prepared longer than that.

When I left the Roman church while in college, I was not willing to leave the Sacraments. I set out intentionally looking only at those churches which have a high view of Baptism and Holy Communion; and by God's grace, I was led to the Lutheran Church. At the same time, I was writing several papers in the English Department at Allegheny College, including a Bachelor's Thesis, which focused on immanence and transcendence. When I arrived at Seminary (Concordia Lutheran Seminary, Edmonton), I fell in love with the Old Testament, largely because I saw in the Hebrew sacrificial system an example of how God comes to man in forgiveness, how the transcendent is made immanent. I saw in the Old Testament cultus both a type of the Incarnation and the forerunner of the Sacraments.

From that time, I have done papers for many different professors in many different courses which enabled me to begin examining this aspect of Old Testament revelation. The length of time it has taken me to write this thesis

itself is not an indication of a dislike for my subject; quite the opposite. The more I probed, the more I found. Meanwhile, my professors were bringing out treasures new and old which kept me constantly revising in my mind. It is, however, now finally done. Deo gratia.

This is, as I said, the temporary culmination of these studies. I hope to continue to explore the theology of Old Testament worship both formally in the pursuit of a doctorate and practically as a servant of Christ, one entrusted with his precious means of grace. To those who have worked to prepare me for both, I offer my heartfelt thanks.

To the Rev. Kenneth Haupt, under whose guidance I was brought into Lutheranism; to Rev. Charles Hanna, whose friendship and fraternity I have continued to find stimulating; to Rev. Robert Luinstra, my bishop, who taught me how much it means to love the people entrusted to your care; and to Rev. Timothy Quill, my present shepherd, for friendship, and support, and for faithfully feeding me during these last three years.

To Dr. Ronald Vahl and Dr. Norman Threinen, who encouraged me in my studies, turned me on to Hebrew, and made my year at Edmonton one that I treasure; also to Richard Kramer and Warren Steckelburg, who likewise contributed to my growth in the Lutheran teachings.

To my professors here at Concordia Seminary, St.

Louis. All have helped make me the student I am. Especially I wish to thank Dr. Horace Hummel, Dr. Paul Raabe, and the proleptic-Dr. Andrew Bartelt of the Old Testament Department, all of whom have had their two cents in this thesis (some considerably more!); Dr. Armin Moellering, for stimulating conversation and the opportunity to study 2 Cor. 5:21; and Dr. Charles Arand, my reader and friend, whose office I inherited. Above all, my gratitude goes to Dr. Wayne Schmidt, the head of the Graduate School, under whom Chapter II took its initial form; Dr. Norman Nagel, who has given me opportunity and encouragement in the study of the means of grace, as well as many other gifts to extol; and to Dr. James Voelz, who, in addition to improving my sheepshead skill, made such an enormous contribution to making this thesis later than it was by introducing me to reader oriented criticism. Place of primacy in this list (which, ironically, is the ultimate spot) goes to Dr. Paul Schrieber, my advisor. It has been a joy to work with him, to learn from him, and to be encouraged by him. In no way is he (or any of the other men I've named) to be held accountable for the shortcomings of this paper; what is good derives in large measure from his (and their) tutelage.

My friends who have seen me through also deserve recognition: those who have gone before me into the Lord's service--the Reverends James Wilson, Timothy Roser, and William Gies especially; those who have remained--notably

Allen Ludwig, the Rev. Michael Middendorf, and the Rev. Kent Heimbigner; and those who are still struggling through-- Edward Callahan, Michael Eckelkamp, Mark Erler and above all Charles Long (and Charmaine) and David Groth (and Gail), with whom Meg and I have shared many excellent evenings of *Gemütlichkeit* and *Schafskopf*. A special debt is owed to Dave for allowing me to use his laser printer in preparing this thesis.

Also to Stephen Ministries, who permitted me to use their printer for the final draft.

This thesis is dedicated to my wife, Meg. I owe to my parents a debt of gratitude for raising me in the Christian faith with a love for God's house and his means of grace. They have never failed to be supportive of me and my endeavors, even when I left the church of my Baptism. But a man must leave his parents and cleave to his wife. For the times of better and worse, richer and poorer, when sick and when well, that Meg has been beside me, has held me together, and urged me along, this thesis is in some ways as much the fruit of her labors as my own. "He who finds a wife finds what is good, and obtains favor from Yahweh."

†SOLI DEO GLORIA†

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Ap	Apology of the Augsburg Confession
FC, Ep	Formula of Concord, Epitome
FC, SD	Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration
GKa	F.H.W. Gesenius und E. Kautsch, <i>Hebräische Grammatik</i> (28th edition).
H	Holiness Code (<i>Heiligkeitsgesetz</i>)
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text
NAS	New American Standard Version
NIV	New International Version
NJPS	New Jewish Publication Society Version
NKJV	New King James Version
OT	Old Testament
RSV	Revised Standard Version
SC	Small Catechism
TDNT	Gerhard Kittel, ed. <i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> . Geoffrey W. Bromiley, translator.
TDOT	G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, eds. <i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> . David E. Green, et al., translators.
<i>Trig.</i>	<i>Concordia Triglotta</i>
TWAT	G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, eds. <i>Theologische Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament</i> .
Williams	Ronald J. Williams, <i>Hebrew Syntax: An Outline</i> . Second edition.

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

G. E. Wright's assessment of the problem of explicating a theology of sacrifice is a warning to all who endeavor such a task:

The Priestly writers have written in some detail about the sacrificial rites, how they were to be performed, how the cultus was organized, etc. But nowhere have they presented a theology of sacrifice; that we must infer as best we can from numerous allusions.¹

This is a problem which afflicts not only those studying Israel's sacrificial cultus but also all who attempt to speak about a given theology of (or in) the Old Testament. The Priestly material, like the other material in the Old Testament, does not seek to set forth a dogmatics text for the reader; rather, one must derive the theology through a proper exegesis of the texts. And there has certainly been no shortage of those who have attempted to piece together the meaning of Israel's cultus, often arriving at widely divergent conclusions. Indeed, the incompatibility of many of these views leads one to wonder if the verdict of the author of Judges might not be appropriate here as well: "each did what was right in his eyes" (Judg. 21:25).

¹G. Ernest Wright, *The Old Testament Against Its Environment* (London: SCM Press, 1950), p. 102.

This thesis is one reader's attempt to come to grips with Old Testament sacrificial theology. The focus of the study is on one verse, Lev. 17:11--*כי נפש הכסף כרם הוא ואני*--*כי-הרם הוא כנפש יכפר*; "For the life of the flesh is [is in] the blood; and I myself have given it for you upon the altar to atone for your lives: because the blood is [is for] the life it atones." While there are those who deny that this verse is applicable to sacrifice in general,² most scholars regard it as the most explicit statement of sacrificial theology in the Old Testament.³ Initially, this reader had planned to examine the recurring phrases in Leviticus 1-5 as providing the key to understanding sacrificial theology; but after further study, it was determined that, while these phrases are very significant for the task, it is necessary to begin by examining Lev. 17:11, in that it affects one's reading of the first five chapters of the book. The goal of this thesis is to examine in detail Lev. 17:11 in its context, and to arrive at an understanding of how it contributes to the Old Testament theology of sacrifice.

²Notably Jacob Milgrom, a Jewish scholar whose work marks the cutting edge of the contemporary study of sacrifice; see below, especially §2.2 "Milgrom's Theory of Sacrifice."

³So, for example, Gerhard von Rad, *Theologie des Alten Testaments. Band I: Die Theologie der geschichtlichen Überlieferungen Israels* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1957), p. 268.

1.1 "Objectivity"

It should be noted from the start that "objectivity" as it is commonly understood is not a goal of this thesis. The primary reason is that such objectivity is considered to be impossible. That is, if by "objectivity" one means that one reads and studies a text without presuppositions and without a hermeneutic, then one is striving after wind. No reader is a *tabula rasa*. All scholars read texts from within a given school of thought. Historical critics have certain presuppositions regarding texts, for instance, starting with the assumption that cultic material is late (post-exilic). Redaction critics assume the existence of an editing tradition; form critics assume that knowing the form of a text enables the reader to pinpoint the *Sitz im Leben* in which it was written. In this thesis, the operating philosophy is not objectivity, but honesty. That is, this reader comes at the text with certain hermeneutical predispositions; it has been his purpose to remain constantly aware of and consistent in the use of these predispositions.

This, of course, opens this thesis up to the charge of subjectivity. Note that the stated purpose of the thesis was to present "one reader's attempt" to understand the text. It does not claim to have the final word. But neither is it merely subjective. The readings given in this work are supported by textual evidence, and by a strong tradition of reading. It is hoped that the views expressed

herein will make some small contribution to the on-going task of studying the sacrifices of the Old Testament.

1.2 Methods

The approach taken in this thesis is primarily synchronic. That is, methods such as etymology or comparative anthropology which try to understand the text on the basis of supposed origins (linguistic or cultural) are avoided. The text is studied within its context: Lev. 17:11 is understood on the basis of Leviticus 17 as a whole, which in turn is understood as a part of the book of Leviticus, which is likewise viewed as a part of the narrative unit extending from Exodus through Numbers. Word studies are primarily limited to usages within this narrative sequence. Texts from sections of scripture outside this unit are used sparingly as tools for understanding the text; they are used more frequently in the sphere of application, of seeing how this text contributes to larger theological issues. This part of the study is covered especially in §3.2, "Translation Notes" for the whole of Leviticus 17, and in §4.2 "Analysis of Verse 11" for the specific text.

With the focus on giving priority to the context of the text, a significant part of this thesis is devoted to the analysis of the structure of both the specific text (Lev. 17:11) and of its various contexts (i.e., chapter and book). The structure of the Book of Leviticus is studied in §3.3.1, "Position of Leviticus 17," while the structure of

chapter 17 is the focus of the rest of §3.3, "Structure of Leviticus 17." Leviticus 17:11's structure is dealt with in §4.1, "Structure." Particular attention is paid to those recurring phrases which seem to serve as indicators of structure and help to define homogeneous units. Syntactical relationships are also considered important, although these tend to be more ambiguous. Flow of thought (as discussed, e.g., in §3.4) is used as a sort of litmus test for proposed structural and syntactic analyses.

If the text is read synchronically, the reader recognizes that his reading is also synchronic. It must be understood against a general scholastic backdrop composed of recent readers of this and related texts. The purpose of Chapter II is to give a survey of contemporary views of sacrifice in general and of Lev. 17:11 in specific. This survey is not intended to be exhaustive, but to indicate the scholarly milieu in which the reading takes place. In specific, the survey focuses on the works of Jacob Milgrom, to whom belongs the place of primacy in current discussions of Old Testament sacrifice. Throughout the thesis, Milgrom's views provide a foil against which the present reader reacts. This is because the reader believes Milgrom's theories to be untenable both textually and hermeneutically. This will be discussed especially in §2.3 and §2.4 and in Chapter V.

The final section of Chapter IV and all of Chapter V

are devoted to the reader's analysis of "meaning" in the text. While chapters III and IV are primarily occupied with the establishing of the sense, or translation equivalents, of the text, the final portion of the thesis turns to the issues of significance, that is, the contribution it makes toward the theology of sacrifice, and of application, what the sense and significance of the text mean for the reader. Part of this discussion includes the examination of both the present reader's hermeneutic and the hermeneutics of other readers. In other words, the text is examined both according to the meaning it seems to have had for the original audience and according to the meaning it has for the present reader; the assumption is made that, while the two may not be identical, they will at least be congruent.

1.3 The Reader's Hermeneutic

The tradition in which this reader operates is that of Confessional Lutheranism. The term "confessional" is preferred over the more ambiguous "conservative." That is, the reading will be informed by the historic teachings of the Lutheran Church as recorded in the Book of Concord. The Confessions inform the reading in two particular ways.

First, the way in which scripture is regarded is affected. It is held to be the written word of God, and the only source and norm for doctrine and faith. This applies

equally to both Testaments.⁴ Just as the Old Testament provides the basis for understanding the New Testament, so also the New Testament is the fulfillment of the Old, through which fulfillment alone the revelation of God can be fully understood. Thus Lev. 17:11 provides the grounding for several important Christian doctrines; likewise, the way in which the New Testament uses Lev. 17:11 and its related texts informs our understanding of these passages. For this reason, the term "Old Testament" is maintained over against "Hebrew Bible," which is preferred by many current scholars. Being the word of God, the historical setting which the text ascribes to itself is accepted as accurate. Leviticus is understood to be the teachings concerning worship and holy living which God provided to his people through Moses while they were encamped at Sinai (Lev. 1:1).

In addition to a high view of scripture, the Confessions provide the reader with a specific understanding of how God works. This has traditionally been referred to as a sacramental view.⁵ God is seen as working in the life of the believer primarily through means: through the word, through water and the word in Baptism, and through bread and wine with the word in the Lord's Supper. The supreme

⁴Cf. FC, Ep. Summary Content, 1-2; FC, SD, Comprehensive Summary, 1-3.

⁵For the best example of a sacramental reading of the Old Testament, see Horace D. Hummel, *The Word Becoming Flesh* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1979).

example of this way of working is the Incarnation, when God became man in Jesus Christ. It is believed that the reason why God works through the physical is not because he needs to, but to give the believer assurance: because God has attached his promise to this means, one can be sure that he is working through it for one's benefit. God locates himself in the means so that believers need have no doubts about where to find him (cf. Exod. 20:24, Yahweh locating himself upon the altar for blessing). The term preferred in this thesis is "means of grace" (Ger.: *Sühnemittel*, "means of atonement") rather than "sacrament." "Means of grace" tends to be less ambiguous, indicating a physical instrumentality through which God gives grace and blessing. "Sacrament," on the other hand, is used by a wider range of confessions, from the Roman Catholic to the Evangelical Reformed, each meaning something different by the term.

The confessional tradition of understanding the levitical sacrifices as means of grace is, however, not totally clear. The Confessions are somewhat ambiguous on this point. In the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the only propitiatory sacrifice which is acknowledged is the death of Christ.⁶ It states that the Old Testament sacrifices are called propitiatory "only to signify a future expiation": *Nam Levitica illa sacrificia propitiatoria*

⁶Ap. XXIV, 22.

*tantum sic appellabantur ad significandum futurum piaculum.*⁷

So, on the one hand, the sacrifices are regarded as primarily types of Christ; on the other, they are held to forgive sins because they point the worshiper to Christ.⁸ The Christological application of Old Testament sacrifice is clearly held; the sacramental or means of grace application is more uncertain.

This is not the case with the Formula of Concord. In the Solid Declaration, Article VII, the Old Testament sacrifices are viewed sacramentally. In the context of discussing Christ's Words of Institution for the Lord's Supper, the Formula states:

here, as in the making of His last will and testament and of His ever-abiding covenant and union, as elsewhere in [presenting and confirming] all articles of faith, and in the institution of all other signs of the covenant and of grace or sacraments, as [for example] circumcision, *the various offerings in the Old Testament* and Holy Baptism, He uses not allegorical but entirely proper, simple, indubitable, and clear words.⁹

⁷Ap. XXIV, 24; *Concordia Triglotta* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), p. 390.

⁸Cf. Ap. XXIV, 14-41 and 52-59; *Trig.*, pp. 387-399 and 403-405.

⁹FC, SD VII, 50; *Trig.*, p. 989, emphasis added. Ger.: . . . (wie sonst in allen Artikeln des Glaubens und aller andern Bundes- und Gnadenzeichen oder Sakramente Einsetzung, als der Beschneidung, der mancherlei Opfer im alten Testament, der heiligen Taufe). . . ; Lat.: . . . quemadmodum etiam in aliis fidei articulis ponendis et confirmandis atque in signis gratiae et pacti seu sacramentis instituentis (verbi gratia in circumcissione, in constituendis olim sacrificiis veteris testamenti, postea vero in Baptismi institutione). . . .

The difference between the Apology and the Formula may be explained by reference to the opposition. In the former case, the issue was whether sacraments forgive sins *ex opere operato*, and the stress is laid upon forgiveness as being given only on account of the death of Christ. In the latter, the question is whether the sacraments forgive sins at all, to which the confessors respond by pointing to the word of promise which is attached to the sign. The reading presented in this thesis agrees with both Confessions, but will tend to emphasize the means of grace aspect of Old Testament sacrifice, following the Formula. In this way, the continuity of the way God works for his people, and its implications for faith and practice, will be underscored.

CHAPTER II
SURVEY OF VIEWS OF SACRIFICE AND
INTERPRETATIONS OF LEVITICUS 17:11

This chapter will focus on various theories of sacrifice proposed since Julius Wellhausen, especially those of Jacob Milgrom, a Jewish scholar whose work in this area marks the cutting edge of current scholarship. His understanding of sacrifice will be examined from three perspectives: methodology, the general argument, and the specific issues involved. The survey of views of sacrifice held since the turn of the century will help to place Milgrom's view in context. Following the explication of Milgrom's theory of sacrifice, his methods and conclusions will be analyzed. The chapter will conclude with a survey of the various interpretations of Lev. 17:11.

2.1 Survey of Theories

One of the major lacunae in the study of sacrifice is the lack of a survey which systematically presents the views of Old Testament sacrifice which were held prior to the Nineteenth Century. J. H. Kurtz¹ provides excellent

¹J. H. Kurtz, *Sacrificial Worship of the Old Testament*, translated by James Martin. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980).

insight to the debate during the last century. Surveys of sacrificial theories held since the turn of the century include those of Douglas Davies, Baruch Levine, and R. J. Thompson². At the risk of oversimplification, the field may be divided into three schools: the critical school; the Kaufmann, or Jewish school; and the theological school.

In the discussion of sacrifice since Wellhausen³, three individuals especially stand out as representatives of the critical school. W. Robertson Smith⁴ established *Religionsgeschichte* (history of religion, or comparative religion) as the dominant methodology of this approach, maintaining that the study of Israel's Near Eastern neighbors' practices was the key to understanding their Old Testament analogs.⁵ For Robertson Smith, the dominant

²Douglas Davies, "An Interpretation of Sacrifice in Leviticus," *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 89 (1977), pp. 387-398; Baruch A. Levine, "Prolegomenon" in *Sacrifice in the Old Testament* by George Buchanan Gray [reprint] (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1971), pp. VII-XLIV; R. J. Thompson, *Penitence and Sacrifice in Early Israel Outside the Levitical Law* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1963), pp. 1-18.

³Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel*, translated by Black and Menzies. (New York: Meridian Books, 1957).

⁴*The Religion of the Semites: The Fundamental Institutions*. (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1889).

⁵"[W]hen we go back to the most ancient religious conceptions and usages of the Hebrews, we shall find them to be the common property of a group of kindred peoples, and not the exclusive possession of the tribes of Israel"

motif in sacrificial worship was communion between the god and the worshipper.⁶ G. B. Gray⁷ offered a slightly different methodology and emphasis. Gray tended to stick more with Old Testament texts and examine them from an etymological viewpoint.⁸ He found *gift* to be the main theme in sacrifice, albeit gift spiritualized so as to be understood as expiatory, propitiatory, and eucharistic.⁹ Roland de Vaux¹⁰ primarily followed Robertson Smith's methodology, but he combined several emphases: "By sacrificial rites, the gift made to God *is* accepted, union with God

(*Religion of the Semites*, pp. 3-4).

⁶The line of thought followed by Robertson Smith--the progression from kinship meals to sacrifice as a kinship meal between the worshipper and the deity--foreshadows the work of Lietzmann on the Lord's Supper, which he finds to be based upon the original fellowship meals shared between Jesus and his disciples. Cf. Hans Lietzmann, *Mass and Lord's Supper: A Study in the History of the Liturgy*, translated by D. H. G. Reeve (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1979).

⁷*Sacrifice in the Old Testament: Its Theory and Practice* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925).

⁸"It is with the rites of Israel as they appear in the Old Testament, rather than with their origins, or the original meaning of their terms that the study of Old Testament sacrifice must chiefly deal" (Thompson, *Penitence*, p. 249, following Gray).

⁹Gray, *Sacrifice*, p. 53.

¹⁰*Ancient Israel, vol. 2: Religious Institutions*, translated by John McHugh (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965); *Studies in Old Testament Sacrifice* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1964).

is achieved, and the guilt of man is taken away".¹¹

There are several representative characteristics of the critical interpretation of Old Testament sacrifice, which are to a greater or lesser extent demonstrated in the works of each of these three men. The first characteristic is an evolutionary view of sacrifice, following the schema of Wellhausen. While sacrifice itself is recognized as an early ("natural") activity of man at worship, the developed system of sacrifices as found in Leviticus and Numbers is seen as a late (post-exilic) innovation of the priestly hierarchy. Also late in developing is the notion of sacrifice as expiatory/propitiatory for sin (since the idea of sin is also considered a later development). The second characteristic, which is more prevalent in Robertson Smith and de Vaux than in Gray, is that of a *religionsgeschichtliche* approach to understanding the theology of sacrifice: as sacrifice was understood among Israel's neighbors, so it--or at least its origins--must have been understood in Israel. The study of sacrifice in the Old Testament thereby became rooted in comparative anthropology rather than in biblical theology. Davies¹² demonstrates this emphasis, as does the inclusion of Mary Douglas' work in virtually every

¹¹*Ancient Israel*, p. 451. Levine claims that de Vaux, being primarily an encyclopedic writer, falls outside of the normal categories, and in fact contributes little to the field ("Prolegomenon," pp. XII-XIII).

¹²"Interpretation," *passim*.

bibliography dealing with this subject.¹³ Related to the *religionsgeschichtliche* approach is the methodology of looking for the meaning of sacrifice either in the etymology of cultic terminology, or in the forms that the sacrificial practice took (i.e., interpreting the rubrics).¹⁴

A second approach to developing a theology of sacrifice is that of Yehezkel Kaufmann.¹⁵ The main thesis which Kaufmann sets forward is that P material is in fact early. He demonstrates the uniqueness of Israel's monotheistic cult over against the polytheistic worship practices of her neighbors. While it is conceded that some Old Testament practices no doubt have their origins in paganism, the monotheism of Israel is understood to control the theology involved.¹⁶ However, while the sacrifices are brought back into the context of the Hebrew faith, Kaufmann

¹³Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966). What is perhaps most surprising about this is that Douglas never discusses sacrifice *per se*. The focus of her sole chapter on the Old Testament is the dietary laws of Leviticus 11.

¹⁴Cf. Davies, "Interpretation," p. 392; Noam Zohar, "Repentance and Purification: The Significance and Semantics of נָחַשׁ in the Pentateuch," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 107 (1988), pp. 614-615.

¹⁵*The Religion of Israel*, translated and abridged by Moshe Greenberg. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960).

¹⁶*Religion*, pp. 110-115.

emphasizes their relationship to impurity and purification (anthropology) rather than to sin and forgiveness (theology). Milgrom, whose theory will be discussed in the next section, follows Kaufmann but carries his views a step further away from theology by claiming that not the worshipper but the sanctuary is the object of the purificatory rites.¹⁷ Both Kaufmann and Milgrom also contrast the antiseptic, silent priestly temple worship with the joyous popular cult. In spite of the early dating of the cultic material, the anthropological emphases of the critical school remain strong in Kaufmann's (and dominant in Milgrom's) approach.¹⁸

A third attempt to come to grips with Old Testament sacrifice is that which is exemplified by G. E. Wright, Gerhard von Rad, Leon Morris, and Angel Rodriguez.¹⁹ This

¹⁷Milgrom, "Israel's Sanctuary: The Priestly 'Picture of Dorian Gray,'" *Studies in Cultic Theology and Terminology* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1983), pp. 75-84.

¹⁸Baruch Levine (*In the Presence of the Lord* [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974]) has been an enigma. On the one hand he seems to follow Kaufmann and Milgrom; on the other, he reintroduces magic as a major concept in Old Testament sacrifice on the basis of its presence in Israel's neighbors. He seems to have retreated from this latter view in his recently published commentary (*The JPS Torah Commentary: Leviticus* [Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989]).

¹⁹G. Ernest Wright, *The Old Testament against Its Environment* (London: SCM Press, 1950); Gerhard von Rad, *Theologie des Alten Testaments. Band I: Die Theologie der geschichtlichen Überlieferungen Israels*, (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1957); Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching*

approach, which (with the exception of von Rad's contribution) has been almost completely ignored by the majority of scholars in this area, emphasizes the divine role in sacrifice over against the human element. Such a view is epitomized by Wright: "The whole cultus in Priestly theology was God's revelation, God's gift to Israel; as such it was a prescribed form of worship, of praise, thanksgiving, communion and especially of atonement for sin."²⁰ This is echoed by von Rad:

Erst das hinzutretende göttliche Wort hat also den materiellen Vollzug zu dem werden lassen, was er sein wollte, nämlich zu einem wirklichen Heilsgeschehen zwischen Jahwe und seinem Volk."²¹

Sacrifice is thus seen as a means of grace,²² and the emphasis is on sin and forgiveness, man's position *coram Deo* (before God), rather than on the anthropological categories of purity and impurity.

The contemporary scene is thus dominated by an

of the Cross (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1965); Angel Rodriguez, *Substitution in the Hebrew Cultus* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1979).

²⁰G. E. Wright, *Old Testament*, p. 104.

²¹*Theologie*, p. 260: "First of all, the joining of the divine word made the material practice what it was meant to be, a substantial salvation-happening between Yahweh and his people."

²²Wright uses this phrase (*Old Testament*, p. 106); in the others, especially von Rad, it is implicit.

anthropological view of sacrifice, epitomized (as will be seen below) by Milgrom's emphasis on purification. While there are dissenting voices, notably those from the third school discussed above, their relative impact on current scholarship is minimal. But the exclusion of their voice by the dominant guild of critical orthodoxy ought not to be a judgement upon the merit of either their argument or their views. A detailed analysis of Leviticus 17 will in fact suggest that they provide a more satisfactory treatment of the biblical evidence than does Milgrom, by virtue of their considering the issue in a theological, rather than an anthropological, framework.

2.2 Milgrom's Theory of Sacrifice

Jacob Milgrom's is the dominant voice in the field of sacrificial theory today. Milgrom's literary contribution is enormous. The majority of his key articles have been collected in three volumes: *Cult and Conscience: The Asham and the Priestly Doctrine of Repentance*;²³ *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible Supplementary Volume*;²⁴ and *Studies in Cultic Theology and Terminology*.²⁵ Any

²³Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976.

²⁴Edited by Keith Crim. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976): "Atonement in the OT;" "Atonement, Day of;" "Leviticus;" "Repentance in the OT;" "Sacrifices and Offerings, OT."

²⁵Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1983.

attempt to come to grips with the theology of sacrifice must first come to grips with the position taken in these works.

Methodologically, Milgrom relies upon etymology and comparative linguistics ("linguistic and conceptual parallels in Israel's anterior and contemporary environment," as he calls them²⁶) to determine the meaning of cultic terms. Secondly, he appeals to the talmudic literature and its interpretation of the texts (the "creative continuum" of the Old Testament).²⁷ The views of contemporary scholars are tertiary at best.²⁸

Milgrom's general argument runs as follows. The key expiatory sacrifice in the Old Testament is the זָבַח , which (he contends) has been mistranslated as "sin-offering." More accurate is "purification-offering".²⁹ In the same way, קָדַשׁ is more properly to be understood as "to purge" than "to atone".³⁰ The object of this purging through a purificatory sacrifice is not the person bringing the

²⁶*Cult and Conscience*, p. 2.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Here is perhaps a parallel to the Lutheran appeal to the Lutheran Confessions (those documents contained in *The Book of Concord*) as chief arbiter of doctrine over against the assured findings of modern scholarship.

²⁹"Sin-offering or Purification-offering?" *Studies*, pp. 67-69.

³⁰"Atonement," pp. 78-79.

sacrifice but the sanctuary. The moral and physical impurities of Israel pollute the sanctuary, which must be purified if God, who is holy and pure, is to remain there.³¹ Man's forgiveness depends not on the blood of the sacrifice (which Milgrom calls a "ritual detergent"), but upon repentance and, in the case of willful sin, reparation.³² There is thus a clear separation of the sacrificial ritual from the worshipper's spirituality.

Turning to the specific issues involved, Milgrom's concept of impurity provides a starting point. He views this according to the anthropological categories of "sacred and profane," which are mutually exclusive.³³ He claims that "biblical impurity was a malefic force" which invades

³¹"Sanctuary," pp. 83-84. This is taken to the extreme by Levine, who sees the expiatory blood as a means of keeping the forces of impurity away from God's residence in the sanctuary. God is not concerned for the life of sinners, but rather for his own. "The sacrificial blood offered to the demonic forces who accept it in lieu of God's 'life'" (Levine, *Presence*, p. 78).

³²"Sanctuary," p. 75; "Atonement, Day of," p. 83. Cf. "Repentance in the OT," *passim*; "The Priestly Doctrine of Repentance," *Studies*, pp. 47-66; *Cult and Conscience*, *passim*. This position is similar to the one taken by H. H. Rowley in his article "The Meaning of Sacrifice in the Old Testament," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 33 (1950), pp. 74-110.

³³None of this is to deny that there is a biblical teaching concerning the distinction between what is clean, unclean, and holy. In Scripture, however, these are not neutral categories: they express a given position לפני ה' יהוה, before God. See especially the discussion by Gordon J. Wenham (*The Book of Leviticus*. [Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979], pp. 18-29).

and pollutes the sanctuary.³⁴ The more serious the impurity, the deeper it penetrated into the sanctuary. Hence the different $\Pi\kappa\upsilon\pi$, one which purified the Holy Place, the other the Most Holy Place. The priest's role was primarily pedagogic: he was "to teach the distinctions 'between the holy and the profane, between the pure and impure' (Lev. 10:10)."³⁵

This understanding of impurity has a direct influence on Milgrom's view of the nature of atonement and expiation. The object of these actions is no longer the worshipper but the sanctuary. In his article, "Atonement in the OT," he notes that

a person never is the object of the *kipper* rite but only the beneficiary. The purpose of the *hatta'th* blood is not to purge the worshipper of alleged sin, as heretofore assumed, but to purge that to which it is applied, i.e., the sanctuary and sanctums.³⁶

Milgrom presents three arguments which he regards as

³⁴"Sanctuary," p. 75; cf. Levine, who considers it demonic (*Presence*, pp. 77-91).

³⁵"Leviticus," p. 541. This is a conflation of Lev. 10:10-11. These verses read: "¹⁰. . . and to distinguish between what is holy and what is common, between what is unclean and what is pure, ¹¹and to teach the sons of Israel all the statutes which Yahweh spoke to them by the hand of Moses." In the text, these are distinct functions of the priestly office, "to distinguish" and "to teach," not one single function "to teach the distinctions" as Milgrom has it.

³⁶"Atonement," p. 79.

decisive against נָאֻטָּן as a "sin-offering."³⁷ First, the נָאֻטָּן is used not only in cases of those who have transgressed the law but also in those of people in a state of physical impurity (lepers, women after childbirth) and of cultic objects (altars), "persons and objects who cannot possibly have sinned."³⁸ Second, the word is a *pi'el* derivative, not a *qal*; whereas כָּוַן in *qal* means "sin," in the *pi'el* it means simply "cleanse, expurgate" as is shown by its semantic pairs. Finally, this is how the Rabbis understood it. He therefore concludes that the blood of the נָאֻטָּן is a ritual detergent which cleanses by absorbing impurity.³⁹

Just as נָאֻטָּן is de-mythologized (moved from the realm of theology to that of anthropology), so is כֶּפֶר . Milgrom derives the word from Akkadian, and interprets it according to ancient concerns for temple purification--hence, "purge."⁴⁰ Even where he defends the translation/interpretation of "ransom/substitute," he understands it as a derivative from Mesopotamian magic texts and understands it

³⁷"Sin-offering?", pp. 67-68.

³⁸"Sin-offering?", p. 67.

³⁹"Sacrifices," p. 767.

⁴⁰"Atonement," pp. 78-79.

to refer to siphoning off the wrath of God.⁴¹ This fits his dictum that an animal's death as a substitute for the one sacrificing "can find no support in scripture."⁴²

If sacrificial blood does not cleanse man, what does? Milgrom claims that "repentance purges man as the *hatta'th* blood does the sanctuary," calling this an "ethical achievement" for Israel's cultus.⁴³ He explains that

Clearly, physical impurity is removed by ablution. . . . Spiritual impurity, on the other hand, caused by inadvertent violation of prohibitive commandments . . . requires no purificatory rite. The fact that his sin is inadvertent . . . and that he feels guilty . . . means that he has undergone inner purification.⁴⁴

This position seems strange, since Milgrom cites the Talmudic pronouncement (T.B. Yom. 5a), "There is no expiation without blood."⁴⁵ But one must remember that for

⁴¹"Atonement," p. 80.

⁴²"Sacrifices," p. 764. Concerning the etymology of the verb קָדַשׁ , see D. P. Wright's discussion of the Akkadian root *kuppuru* (*The Disposal of Impurity: Elimination Rites in the Bible and in Hittite and Mesopotamian Literature*. SBL Dissertation Series 101 [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987]; cf. pp. 290-299). Wright concludes that the verb and its nouns refer to a purification rite performed by wiping, and ought not be abstracted to mean "purify" (p. 298). This makes it an unlikely antecedent for the Hebrew קָדַשׁ , and thus unlikely that the Old Testament understanding of קָדַשׁ in cultic worship is influenced by Akkadian concepts.

⁴³"Atonement, Day of," p. 83.

⁴⁴"Sanctuary," p. 75.

⁴⁵Cf. Heb. 9:22, which has purification and forgiveness in parallel construction.

Milgrom expiation refers to temple cleansing, not to forgiving sins.⁴⁶

From this evidence Milgrom's basic objectives may be discerned. These may be stated positively and negatively. He writes: "The advantage of freeing the *hatta't* from the theologically foreign notion of sin and restoring to it its pristine meaning of purification is that now it is possible to see this sacrifice against its true ancient Near Eastern setting."⁴⁷ Positively, he desires to set it in the context of the cultic worship of other nations (*Religionsgeschichte*). Negatively, he seeks to rid sacrifice of "theologically foreign" (Christian?) notions, such as sin and substitution, and restore it to the neutral territory of "pure/impure."

According to Milgrom, the role of expiatory sacrifices is to cleanse or purify the sanctuary, not the individual. The result is "a radical dissociation of spiritual process

⁴⁶The final footnote of Milgrom's article, "A Prolegomenon to Leviticus 17:11," *Studies*, pp. 96-103, indicates that he is primarily interested in denying the existence of an Old Testament teaching of vicarious atonement: "This is not to deny that the blood is the atoning force in all expiatory sacrifices as a survey of relevant verses will verify . . . and which the Talmudic dictum, 'Expiation is only with blood,' confirms However, it is now questionable whether Lev 17:11 may again serve as a basis for the substitutionary theory of sacrifice" (p. 103 n. 34).

⁴⁷"Sin-offering?" pp. 68-69.

from concrete ritual."⁴⁸ Whether or not this is an accurate or even adequate understanding of Old Testament sacrifice is the question which must now be considered.

2.3 Analysis of Milgrom's Theory

In assessing Milgrom's theory of sacrifice, it is necessary to begin with his methodology. Of primary concern is his heavy dependence on etymology and cross-cultural parallels. While these may be helpful, e.g., in establishing the sense of rare words, they are not determinative. Rather, context and usage must serve as the primary determinant of a word's meaning, since knowing what a word meant in a prior context does not mean one knows what it means in its present one. Christopher Mitchell, in his study of בָּרַךְ ("to bless"), follows James Barr and John Lyons in favoring contextual (synchronic) evidence over etymological (diachronic) evidence: "Word meanings should not be made to include an original root meaning unless there is good synchronic evidence that the original meaning is still present."⁴⁹ In this respect, Leon Morris, writing before Barr, may be seen as ahead of his time. In his discussion

⁴⁸Zohar, "Repentance," p. 610.

⁴⁹Christopher Wright Mitchell, *The Meaning of brk "To Bless" in the Old Testament*. SBL Dissertation Series 95 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), p. 9; cf. the full discussion, pp. 3-10. See also Terence J. Keegan, *Interpreting the Bible* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1985), pp. 24-39; J. P. Louw, *Semantics of New Testament Greek* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press/Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982), pp. 23-31.

of 79], Morris writes

when we are seeking to establish the meaning of a word it is the usage in Hebrew that is decisive. In examining the meaning of *kipper* scholars often adduce words from other Semitic languages; but while due allowance must be made for the importance of such evidence, in the last resort it is the way the Hebrew actually used the word which really counts.⁵⁰

As with etymology, so with comparative practices. It is to be noted that Milgrom here breaks with Kaufmann, who rejected the pagan roots of Israelite religion "*in toto*."⁵¹ At the same time, Dennis McCarthy's examination of blood rituals⁵² and E. Hammershaimb's study of the role of history in the cult⁵³ support the uniqueness of the Hebrew cult. McCarthy writes:

Where are the parallels to Lev. 17 11: blood is given by God, and so it has purifying power? It is rash to extrapolate this isolated theory into an explanation on the meaning of blood in rite and sacrifice in the ancient Near Eastern world, let alone religion in general.⁵⁴

⁵⁰*Apostolic Preaching*, p. 166. Cf. Thompson's summary of Gray's approach, note 8 above.

⁵¹Kaufmann, *Religion*, p. 2.

⁵²Dennis J. McCarthy, "The Symbolism of Blood and Sacrifice," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 88 (1969), 166-176.

⁵³E. Hammershaimb, "History and Cult in the Old Testament," in *Near Eastern Studies in Honor of William Foxwell Albright*, edited by Hans Goedicke (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1971), pp. 269-282.

⁵⁴"Symbolism," pp. 169-170.

Again, McCarthy:

we must . . . conclude that the evidence from the ancient Semitic and Aegean areas does not show a general belief outside Israel in blood as a divine agent which served as the basic reason or explanation for sacrifice.⁵⁵

Such findings render Milgrom's "linguistic and conceptual parallels"⁵⁶ less likely to prove helpful in coming to an understanding of their Israelite "counterparts."

Milgrom's dependence on the Talmud may also cause some problems. Such an appeal to tradition is not necessarily negative.⁵⁷ But it should be asked, Are the rabbis the most reliable interpreters of Old Testament sacrifice? One needs to bear in mind that their writings were brought together and reworked after the fall of the temple and the end of the sacrificial cultus. During this time, sacrifice was spiritualized (a process begun in the synagogues) and replaced with prayer and Torah study.⁵⁸ So one must

⁵⁵"Symbolism," p. 176.

⁵⁶*Cult and Conscience*, p. 2.

⁵⁷The question as to whether Milgrom interprets the Rabbis correctly is beyond both the scope of this paper and the author's competency.

⁵⁸Shaye J. D. Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1987), pp. 60-103. J. R. Porter makes a similar observation in his article on "Leviticus" in the recently published *A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*, edited by R. J. Coggins and J. L. Houlden (London: SCM Press/Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990). He notes that by the first century AD the sacrifices had already come to be "regarded . . . as

question the prominence Milgrom gives them, particularly given his general disregard of the Septuagint, which stands even earlier in this "creative continuum."⁵⁹

In general, one must also ask if Milgrom's objectives (see above, p. 24) have become the *de facto* basis for decisions of exegesis. This is most clearly seen in his emphasis on the sanctuary as the object of expiation in the NKUP . While this is obviously the case for parts of the Day of Atonement ritual (Leviticus 16), a distinction between "object" and "beneficiary"⁶⁰ is not observed in the texts dealing with the NKUP ritual (Leviticus 4). In fact, it is not quite clear why distinguishing between the object and the beneficiary would make a *theological* difference. The

something of an embarrassment," and that Philo and other Jewish interpreters either allegorized them or "moralized them away entirely" (p. 391). He also observes that currently "later Jewish tradition, as contained particularly in the Mishnah and Talmud, . . . is seen as throwing valuable light on the significance and ritual of the various classes of Levitical sacrifice" (p. 393). However, he fails to relate these two facts, and call into question whether a tradition which seeks to explain away the central importance of the sacrifices to the worship of Israel is one which can truly throw light on them.

⁵⁹Cf. Morris, *Apostolic Preaching*, who is largely dependent on the LXX as a theological translation of the Hebrew. Milgrom's reluctance to use the LXX cannot be simply a case of guarding against Hellenization, since he readily adduces support from Philo, who was far more influenced by Platonism than the LXX, to "confirm" his view of repentance ("The Priestly Doctrine of Repentance," pp. 58-59).

⁶⁰Milgrom, "Sanctuary," p. 76.

fact that the rite benefits a person whose sins (or impurity) had polluted the sanctuary indicates that God would otherwise have held the individual accountable for that pollution. Therefore, *theologically* speaking, object and beneficiary is an irrelevant distinction. Moreover, in Leviticus 16 the phrase $\text{לְעַלְוֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ}$ is completed by both sanctuary objects (16:16, 18) and persons (16:33), which indicates that they are either both beneficiaries or both objects of the verb.⁶¹ Both objects and people are "purged" or "purified" by the blood, and the people are thus rendered pure (קָדְשׁ) before Yahweh (16:30). Zohar claims that the purpose of the $\text{זָבַח הַכִּפּוּרִים}$ is the dissociation of a person's sin through the transfer of that sin to an animal.⁶² This echoes the conclusions of Rodriguez: "The blood cleanses because it bears the sin/impurity of the sinner to the presence of Yahweh, and there sin/impurity is brought under His controlling power."⁶³ Thus, both Rodriguez and Zohar conclude that the one sacrificing is the

⁶¹Milgrom argues for taking the phrase differently depending on whether what completes it is animate or not (*Cult and Conscience*, p. 76); but this leads to a circular argument.

⁶²How Zohar is able to deny, in spite of his own evidence, that this is *substitutionary* atonement (p. 611) is a mystery. But see note 64, below.

⁶³*Substitution*, p. 144.

primary object of the קָטַב .⁶⁴ (Leviticus 17:11 is a key verse in Milgrom's theory. The difficulties of applying this verse only to the קָטַב , as Milgrom⁶⁵ and Herbert Brichto⁶⁶ attempt to do [see below], are noted even by Milgrom.⁶⁷ Zohar and Rodriguez oppose such a limitation, and take it to be a general statement of the efficacy of sacrificial blood for atonement in a context where the

⁶⁴Zohar's derivation of קָטַב as "transfer" on the basis of Gen. 31:46 provides strong possibilities for demonstrating the very thing he wishes to disprove: the substitutionary nature of the sacrifice. This needs to be addressed in a separate paper. On the substitutionary force of קָטַב in general, see Morris, *Apostolic Preaching*, pp. 160-173.

⁶⁵"Prolegomenon."

⁶⁶"On Slaughter and Sacrifice, Blood and Atonement," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 17 (1976), pp. 19-55.

⁶⁷In spite of his claim to have resolved the contradiction (expiation in a non-expiatory sacrifice), it remains: "The context of the verse treats exclusively of the קָטַב , the only sacrifice without an expiatory function. It informs the Israelite that slaughtering a sacrificial animal for its flesh constitutes murder unless he offers its blood upon the altar as expiation for his life" ("Prolegomenon," p. 103). Is it expiatory or not? Brichto's solution of seeing this as a *quid pro quo* ("On Slaughter," pp. 27-29) has the benefit of avoiding talk of expiation, but seems to introduce modern legal concepts (composition) into the matter. The question remains with Brichto: if the animal did not belong to man in the first place, but to God, how can the giving of its blood, the קָטַב of the animal, constitute a payment of composition from man to God? Moreover, how does this reconcile with the fact that it is God, not man, who gives the blood upon the altar?

sanctuary cannot be the object.⁶⁸)

If this is the case, that the *זבח* has a person as its primary object, how does one handle those cases in which it is physical impurity, not sin, which is the "problem"?⁶⁹ The prior assumption, held also by Rodriguez, is that there is no moral dimension to this physical impurity. If, *contra* Milgrom, the biblical witness of original sin and man's inherent impurity *coram Deo* is allowed to stand (cf. Ps. 51:5; Genesis 3),⁷⁰ then any physical impurity, be it "leprosy" or some form of discharge, would be a manifestation of that natural condition. The same holds for the building of altars: the product of sinful human hands needs to be purified for sinless Yahweh to use it. Because he disregards the scriptural witness to man's inherent sinful condition, Milgrom needs to provide an alternative to the biblical explanation of sacrifice.

Finally, the question of the separation of the physical and spiritual needs to be addressed. Von Rad denies that this separation can be made in the Hebrew

⁶⁸Zohar, "Repentance," p. 611; Rodriguez, *Substitution*, pp. 233-259.

⁶⁹See especially Rodriguez, *Substitution*, pp. 101-105.

⁷⁰For a more complete discussion of sin in the Old Testament, see Stanislas Lyonnet and Leopold Sabourin, *Sin, Redemption, and Sacrifice* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1970), pp. 5-23. "The malice of sin . . . is not found so much in the external act of disobedience as in the internal perversion that corrupts man in his inmost being" (p. 6).

religion.

Alle diese priesterschriftlichen Angaben von Opferhandlungen sind von massivster Dinglichkeit. Vergeblich sucht der Leser nach tragfähigen Anhaltspunkten, um sich auf dem Weg über die hinter den Opferhandlungen liegenden Opfervorstellungen ins Geistige erheben zu können Israels Glaube läßt sich unmöglich in zwei derart einander fremde Religionsformen zerlegen; vielmehr war Israel des Glaubens, daß sich Jahwes Heilszuwendungen nicht in geschichtlichen Taten oder auch in der gnädigen Lenkung der Einzelschicksale erschöpft, sondern daß Jahwe auch im Opferkultus eine Einrichtung geschaffen habe, die Israel eine standigen Lebensverkehr mit ihm eröffnete.⁷¹

Zohar likewise shows that this "radical dissociation" is foreign to the text. It seems that Milgrom, rather than deducing this separation, begins with a Platonic (Gnostic?) view of religion, which seeks to separate the physical and the spiritual. His work, therefore, aims toward the goal of explaining away the bloody nature of the worship which Yahweh instituted in Leviticus.

2.4 Interpretations of Leviticus 17:11

In attempting to explicate the Old Testament theology of sacrifice, the key question with which scholars have been concerned is that raised by Zohar: "Just what is it in the

⁷¹*Theologie*, pp. 258-259: "All these priestly-writing instructions for the handling of sacrifice are of quite solid thingliness. In vain the reader searches for supporting clues to enable him to rise by the way of the understanding of sacrifice underlying the handling of sacrifice Israel's faith cannot be divided into two such mutually foreign religious forms; rather Israel was of the belief that Yahweh's turning to her in salvation was not exhausted in historical action nor in the gracious guidance of individual lives, but rather that Yahweh also in the sacrificial cultus had created an instrument which opened to Israel a continuous relationship with him."

nature of blood that gives it this great power [to effect purification], and how does it work?"⁷² While it must be conceded that there are few texts which attempt to give any kind of basis for the sacrificial system (other than the fact that it was instituted by God: the entire so-called P narrative of Exodus-Leviticus-Numbers assumes the divine revelation of the worship of Israel at Sinai), the verse which has received the greatest amount of attention in this regard is Leviticus 17:11. The next chapter will initiate a detailed analysis of this verse with an examination of Leviticus 17 *in toto*. But prior to such an investigation, it is helpful to review how others have understood this verse.

According to Milgrom, there is a "uniformity in translation" of Lev. 17:11 which has been "matched by uniformity in interpretation."⁷³ That is, it has become so commonplace to interpret this verse as the basis for a priestly sacrificial theology that such an interpretation is no longer even questioned. Likewise, that the blood was

⁷²"Repentance," p. 610. Paul Bretscher also raises this question in relation to the statement in Heb. 10:4 - "It is not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins." He places the question parallel to Luther's question concerning Baptism in the Small Catechism: "Wie kann Wasser solch große Dinge tun?" ("How can water do such great things?"; cf. SC IV, 9; *Trig.* pp. 550-551) and suggests that the answer would be similar ("The Covenant of Blood," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 25 [1954], pp. 1-27, 109-125, 199-209; cf. p. 19).

⁷³"Prolegomenon," p. 96.

efficacious for forgiveness is taken as an *a priori*.⁷⁴ Within this "uniformity in interpretation" there are, however, some interesting differences of nuance. While the interpreters usually wind up at approximately the same place, it is important to observe these variations before moving on to examine Milgrom's approach to the text more closely.

It is interesting to note that both Robertson Smith and Gray made only passing reference to this verse in their seminal works on sacrifice. It seems that, however they interpreted Lev. 17:11, they found it to be either incompatible with, or antithetical to, their theories regarding sacrifice.⁷⁵ While Robertson Smith refers frequently to various non-Israelite blood-rites,⁷⁶ he has little, and nothing specific, to say about the blood sacrifices in the Old Testament.⁷⁷ Apparently, the idea of an expiatory blood-rite did not fit into his view that communion was the

⁷⁴This is Milgrom's chief concern, as already noted above; he disputes not so much the expiatory power of blood as the vicarious/substitutionary atonement that is usually implied ("Prolegomenon," p. 103n.34).

⁷⁵Rowley ("Meaning") avoids this verse completely.

⁷⁶*Religion of the Semites*, pp. 233-235, 337, 653.

⁷⁷He does place Lev. 17:11 in context with the narrative of the sacrifice of Isaac in order to show that animal sacrifice came to replace the offering of human life (*Religion of the Semites*, p. 366).

key to understanding sacrifice.⁷⁸ Gray spends one and a half paragraphs discussing the expiatory power of blood;⁷⁹ but the phrase *לְרַחֵם אֶתְּכֶם* receives more than five pages of attention.⁸⁰ His understanding that sacrifice was primarily a gift from man to God seems to necessitate avoiding a detailed analysis of an aspect of sacrifice which points in the opposite direction (Lev. 17:11--"I [Yahweh] have given it to you").

Kurtz, on the other hand, comes back to this text repeatedly. While he follows Hengstenberg in rejecting Bähr's claim that Lev. 17:11 was the key to the theory of sacrifice, he nonetheless emphasized its seminal contribution to such a theory.⁸¹ With reference to this verse, he writes

The blood was the means of expiation, the sprinkling of blood the act of expiation; and Jehovah Himself, who appointed this as the mode of expiation for Israel . . .

⁷⁸Thompson, citing one of Robertson Smith's contemporary critics, observes that such a position undermines the Christian doctrine of salvation through the vicarious bloody death of Christ for sinners (*Penitence*, p. xi). He also notes the parallel between this view of sacrifice and the view of the Lord's Supper which derives it from a simple fellowship meal; see above, note 6.

⁷⁹*Sacrifice*, p. 76.

⁸⁰*Sacrifice*, pp. 76-81.

⁸¹*Sacrificial Worship*, p. 52-53.

acknowledged thereby its validity and force.⁸²

The key, however, to a proper theory of sacrifice, Kurtz maintained, was the idea of self-surrender.⁸³

Both von Rad and de Vaux follow Keil in understanding Lev. 17:11 as providing the reason why blood worked expiation: i.e., because it is the bearer or seat of life.⁸⁴ De Vaux offers the following translation of the verse:

the life of flesh is in its blood. This blood I have given to you, in order that you may perform the rite of expiation upon the altar, for your lives; for the blood makes expiation for a life (or: for blood makes expiation, by reason of the life that is in it).⁸⁵

While he seems to be torn here between two possible ways of translating וְחַיָּוִת (does it refer to the life of the victim or the one offering it?), in his later work he has reached a resolution: "there is no question in this passage of the substitution of the victim for the offerer, nor any question of the life of an offerer; the concern is with the life of

⁸²*Sacrificial Worship*, p. 56.

⁸³*Sacrificial Worship*, p. 57. This is similar to the views of Rowley and Milgrom, who emphasize humility and penitence over the ritual act in sacrifice.

⁸⁴C. F. Keil, *The Pentateuch. Biblical Commentary on the OT* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1985 [reprint]), p. 410; von Rad, *Theologie*, p. 269; de Vaux, *Studies*, p. 93.

⁸⁵*Ancient Israel*, p. 419.

the victim, which is its blood."⁸⁶ Von Rad, noting that "Jahweh has 'given' the people of Israel this life-blood," still emphasizes that blood atones because it contains life.⁸⁷ He further notes the difficulty of piecing together a priestly theology of sacrifice because: (a) "unfortunately, P almost nowhere condescends to give its own suggestions for interpretation" of the rituals⁸⁸; and (b) "On the subjective condition of those who desired atonement, one can conclude nothing from these texts."⁸⁹

Recent interpreters tend to follow a similar line of thought. A. Noordtzij understands verse 11 to provide two reasons for the proscription against eating blood (v. 10): blood is identified with life, which properly belongs to God

⁸⁶*Studies*, p. 93.

⁸⁷*Theologie*, p. 268-269.

⁸⁸"Leider hat sich P fast nirgends zu eigenen interpretierenden Hinweisen herbeigelassen" (*Theologie*, p. 268).

⁸⁹"Von der subjektiven Verfassung derer, die die Sühne begehrten, ist diesen Texten nichts zu entnehmen." (*Theologie*, p. 270). Martin Noth follows in the same vein, highlighting both the God-giveness of the blood and especially its ability to atone as the seat of life (*Das dritte Buch Mose. Das Alte Testament Deutsch, Band 6* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966], p. 113). He translates the verse: "Denn das Leben des Fleisches sitzt im Blute, und ich selbst habe es (das Blut) euch zur Berfüzung gestellt (zum Gebrauch) auf dem Altar, damit ihr (damit) für euch selbst Sühne schafft; denn des Blut ist es, das kraft des (in ihm sitzenden) Lebens sühnt" (p. 110).

(cf. Lev. 19:26; Deut. 12:23-25; Ezek. 33:25; Zech. 9:7)⁹⁰; and God determines the proper disposition of this life-bearing blood.⁹¹ Walter Kornfeld notes that the "*Ich-Form*" of the verse serves to emphasize it as the theological foundation for verse 10, and that it is the blood as the bearer of life ("*das im Blut enthaltene Leben*") which serves as a means of atonement ("*Sühnemittel*").⁹² N. Füglistner's annotated translation emphasizes the role of וְדָם in atonement⁹³ as does Wenham, who highlights the idea of ransom.⁹⁴ Bernd Janowski summarizes his view in two statements: he notes that "*das im Blut enthaltene Leben die Basis des kultischen Sühnegeschehen*" and that this is a

⁹⁰Noth: "Die Begründung in V. 11a α beruht auf der uralten Vorstellung, daß das „Leben“ . . . seinen konkreten Sitz im Blute habe und daß dieses „Leben“ Gott gehöre und darum unter keinen Umständen menschlicherseits angeeignet werden dürfe" (*Das dritte Buch Mose*, p. 113).

⁹¹*Leviticus*. Bible Student's Commentary. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982), p. 177.

⁹²*Levitikus*. Die Neue Echter Bibel. (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1983), p. 68.

⁹³"Sühne durch Blut--zur Bedeutung von Leviticus 17, 11," in *Studien zum Pentateuch, Walter Kornfeld zum 70 Geburtstag*. Edited by G. Braulik. (Wien: Herder, 1977), p. 143.

⁹⁴*Leviticus*, pp. 239, 245.

"göttlichen Gabe des Sühnemittels Blut."⁹⁵ Finally, Rodriguez more than any other interpreter emphasizes the substitutionary nature of this verse, while giving equal place to Yahweh's having designated the vicarious sacrifices as means of expiation.⁹⁶

Leviticus 17:11 has thus been taken by its interpreters to be, at least to some extent, a basis for the priestly doctrine of sacrificial atonement through blood. Different interpreters emphasize different aspects of the verse (e.g., blood as life-bearer or blood as gift of God), and not all see in it a doctrine of substitution (e.g., de Vaux). Milgrom, however, takes a stance different from all the others by claiming that this verse "has nothing to do

⁹⁵"the life contained in the blood is the basis of the cultic atonement-event"; "a divine gift of the means of atonement blood" (*Sühne als Heilsgeschehen: Studien zur Sühnetheologie der Priesterschrift und zur Wurzel KPR im Alten Orient und im Alten Testament* [Neukirchener Verlag, 1982], p. 247).

⁹⁶*Substitution*, pp. 259-260. His stress on the provision of the sacrifices as an act of divine love echoes Dillmann's observation a century earlier: that God's giving the blood is a "Gnadenact" (*Die Bücher Exodus und Leviticus*. [Leipzig: Verlag von S. Hirzel, 1880], p. 538). This emphasis on objective, divine grace, as opposed to the emphasis of Rowley et al. on some inner expression of faith (humility, penitence, self-surrender, etc.), is directly related to the question surrounding the Lord's Supper regarding forgiveness and the presence of the body and blood: are they there because of the faith of the recipient, or because God in His grace has willed to give the body with the bread, the blood with the wine for forgiveness? Cf. FC, Ep VII, 35,37.

with the expiation of sin in general."⁹⁷

His argument runs as follows. Leviticus 17:11 can refer only to the \square שלמים because: (1) verses 10-14 form a bipartite law concerning domestic animals and game;⁹⁸ (2) verses 3-5 rule that domestic animals must be slaughtered at the altar; and so (3) since this is a case of eating meat which had been sacrificed, it must be the \square שלמים, since this was the only sacrifice of which the laity partook.⁹⁹ But this causes a problem, since the \square שלמים is a non-expiatory sacrifice.¹⁰⁰ The problem is compounded by the phrase \square לנפך על נפש, which indicates that one is guilty of a capital offense (cf. Exod. 30:11-16; Num. 31:48-54), for which P

⁹⁷"Leviticus," p. 543.

⁹⁸Milgrom claims that the "substructure of Leviticus 17 is not of immediate relevance" ("Prolegomenon," p. 102n.28). That this claim does not hold up under investigation will be seen in the next chapter; see §3.2, "Structure of Leviticus 17."

⁹⁹"Sacrifices," p. 770; "Prolegomenon," p. 99.

¹⁰⁰"Prolegomenon," pp. 100-101. To support his claim, Milgrom is forced to deny that Ezek 45:15,17 ascribes expiatory power to the \square שלמים, although the text allows for no other sense. While it must be conceded that Leviticus does not use the word \square לנפך in the context of the \square שלמים, it is by no means certain that it is non-expiatory. In the sacrifice, the offerer lays his hand on the head of the animal (Lev. 3:2). The purpose of laying on the hand is given in 1:4-- \square לנפך עליו ("and it will be accepted for him to atone for him"). While the purpose clauses of the first three chapters of Leviticus do not explicitly mention \square לנפך (as compared with the purpose clauses of chs. 4-5), this verse indicates that it is probably at least implicit in the sacrifice.

recognizes no expiatory sacrifice.¹⁰¹ He resolves this problem by linking verse 11 directly to verses 3-4, in which bloodguilt is ascribed to anyone who sheds blood without offering it. Thus, the blood of the שלמים serves to expiate¹⁰² the guilt incurred by slaughtering the animal for food.

That Milgrom's interpretation is untenable for many different reasons will be demonstrated in the following chapters. For now, let it suffice to indicate the internal contradictions which weaken the argument.

(1) Milgrom claims that the שלמים is non-expiatory. But he then ascribes to it an expiatory function, that of removing the guilt incurred by shedding blood.

(2) He claims that P knows of no expiatory sacrifice for a capital crime. But he further notes that לנפר על נפש "must mean that the Israelite is guilty of a capital offense against God, and unless he brings sacrificial blood to the altar, he is subject to the death penalty."¹⁰³ But if there is no expiatory sacrifice for capital offense, why is the blood brought to the altar?

(3) He asserts that the absence of the ג from verses

¹⁰¹"Prolegomenon," p. 101.

¹⁰²It is interesting that Milgrom claims that the word "ransom" best translates נפר in this verse ("Prolegomenon," p. 98), but denies any notion of substitution.

¹⁰³"Prolegomenon," p. 101.

3-4 and from verse 11 supports his argument.¹⁰⁴ However, the לֵךְ are specifically mentioned in verse 10. (This is similar to his claim that Ezek. 45:15,17 does not understand the שְׁלָמִים as expiatory, even though verse 15 reads: $\text{לְמַנְחָה וְלַעֲוֹלָה וְלְשִׁלְמִים לְכַפֵּר עָלֵיהֶם}$.)

In spite of von Rad's reference to it as a "tortuous statement"¹⁰⁵ and Zohar's claim that it "is too unspecific to yield a meaningful explanation on its own,"¹⁰⁶ Lev. 17:11 remains the key verse for arriving at the Old Testament theology of sacrifice. The majority of interpreters understand it to provide two reasons for the efficacy of blood: that blood is the bearer of life; and that God has given it. This is understood in both substitutionary (e.g., Rodriguez) and non-substitutionary (e.g., de Vaux) ways. Milgrom's is the main dissenting voice to this position, but his argument suffers from internal contradictions.

While almost all the interpreters refer in one way or another to the context of Lev. 17:11, there has not been to date a detailed analysis of chapter 17, noting especially structural details, in order to better understand this disputed verse. The next chapter will begin this analysis.

¹⁰⁴"Prolegomenon," p. 103 n. 33.

¹⁰⁵"gewundene Aussage," (*Theologie*, p. 268).

¹⁰⁶"Repentance," p. 611.

CHAPTER III
ANALYSIS OF LEVITICUS 17

This chapter will present a detailed analysis of Leviticus 17. To date, the only other works concerned with such detail have been the commentaries of Bruno Baentsch¹ and Karl Elliger² and the works of Walter Kornfeld, Henning G. Reventlow, Rudolph Kilian, Christian Feucht and Roger Cotton on the Holiness Code.³ All of these, however, primarily use structure to support source- or form-critical views; only Cotton attempts to move from structural analysis to theology.

This chapter is divided into four parts: translation;

¹*Handkommentar zum Alten Testament. Abteil 1, Band 2: Exodus-Leviticus-Numeri* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1903).

²*Leviticus. Handbuch zum Alten Testament* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck] Verlag, 1966).

³Kornfeld, *Studien zum Heiligkeitsgesetz (Lev. 17-26)* (Wein: Verlag Herder, 1952); Reventlow, *Das Heiligkeitsgesetz: Formgeschichtlich Untersucht* (Neukirchener Verlag, 1961); Kilian, *Literarkritische und Formgeschichtliche Untersuchung des Heiligkeitsgesetzes* (Bonn: Peter Hanstein Verlag, 1963); Feucht, *Untersuchungen zum Heiligkeitsgesetz* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1964); Cotton, "A Study of the Rhetorical and Thematic Structures of the So-called 'Holiness Code' (Leviticus 17-26) in order to Evaluate Unity and Authenticity." STM Thesis Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1981.

translation notes; structure; and flow of thought. The translation follows the Masoretic Text (MT) almost exclusively. The text is well preserved and in need of no serious emendation. However, the Septuagint (LXX) and the Samaritan Pentateuch seem to preserve a slightly different tradition from the MT. The translation is given in a form which reflects the internal structural markers of the text. The translation notes (§3.2) will call attention to variant readings, places where translation has differed, and grammatical, semantic, and theological concerns. In the section on structure (§3.3), both the position of chapter 17 in the book of Leviticus and the internal structure of Leviticus 17 will be discussed. Finally, the flow of thought, or analysis of content, will be presented (§3.4) in order to show how Lev. 17:11 fits into this chapter. Detailed analysis of verse 11 will be presented in the next chapter.

3.1 Translation

¹And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying:

²"Speak to Aaron and to his sons and to all the sons of Israel, and say to them, 'This is the thing which Yahweh has commanded, saying:

³"Anyone of the house of Israel who slaughters an ox or a lamb or a goat in the camp, or who slaughters [it] outside the camp ⁴and does not bring it to the entrance of the tent of meeting to offer an offering to Yahweh before the tabernacle of Yahweh, blood will be imputed to that man: he has spilled blood, and that man will be cut off from among his people, ⁵so that the sons of Israel

will bring their sacrifices which they are sacrificing in the open field and will bring them to the entrance of the tent of meeting to the priest and they will sacrifice them [as] communion sacrifices to Yahweh. ⁶And the priest will splash the blood upon the altar of Yahweh [at] the entrance of the tent of meeting, and will burn the fat for an aroma of appeasement to Yahweh. ⁷And they will not continue to sacrifice their sacrifices to the *se'rim* after which they have been whoring--this is a perpetual ordinance for them and for their descendants."

⁸"And you will say to them,

'Anyone of the house of Israel or of the resident aliens who reside among them who offers a whole-burnt-offering or a sacrifice ⁹and he does not bring it to the entrance of the tent of meeting to make it to Yahweh, that man will be cut off from his people.

¹⁰'And anyone of the house of Israel or of the resident aliens residing among them who consumes any blood, I will set my face against the life of the one consuming the blood and I will cut it off from among its people, ¹¹for the life of the flesh is the blood, and I myself have given it to you upon the altar to atone for your lives: because the blood is for the life it atones. ¹²For this reason I have said to the sons of Israel, "None of you will consume blood, and neither will the resident alien residing among you consume blood."

¹³'And anyone of the sons of Israel or of the resident aliens residing among them who will hunt [as] game an animal or bird which may be eaten, he will spill its blood and cover it with dust, ¹⁴because the life of all flesh is its blood; its life it is, and I have said to the sons of Israel, "The blood of any flesh you will not consume, because the life of all flesh is its blood. Anyone who consumes it will be cut off."

¹⁵'And anyone who eats a carcass or what was killed by animals, whether native or resident alien, he will wash his clothes and bathe with water, and be unclean until evening; then he will be clean. ¹⁶But if he does not wash or he does not bathe his flesh, he will bear his guilt.'"

3.2 Translation Notes

v. 2. וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-אַהֲרֹן וְאֶל-כָּל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל -- "Speak to Aaron and to his sons and to all the sons of Israel"

The audience here is the entire assembly of Israel, both "clergy" and "laity." They are the intended receptors of the entire chapter, since at no point is a change of address indicated. According to Hebert Brichto the first part of the chapter (vv. 3-7) "is addressed primarily to the priests and secondarily to the Israelites."⁴ R. K. Harrison, on the other hand, claims that the chapter says "virtually nothing" about the priests' role, focusing instead on what the "ordinary worshipper" is to do or not to do with respect to the cultus.⁵

The most common form of this phrase (which is used as a structural marker throughout Leviticus; see below, §3.3.1)

⁴Herbert Chanan Brichto, "On Slaughter and Sacrifice, Blood and Atonement," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 17 (1976), pp. 19-55; p. 24.

⁵Harrison, *Leviticus* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), p. 178. Cf. Gordon J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979), p. 240.

refers only to the **יְשׂרָאֵל** **בְּנֵי** as the audience (Lev. 1:2; 4:2; 7:23,29; 12:2; 18:2; 19:2; 23:2,10,24,34; 25:2; 27:2).

Where the given ordinances pertain specifically to the priests, the phrase is **וְאֵל-בְּנֵי** (Lev. 6:18; 16:2; 21:17; 22:2; similarly, 6:2, which reads **צֹרֵךְ אֶת-אֹהֲרֶךְ**). The only other time both groups are indicated together is 22:18, which introduces legislation concerning the offering of acceptable sacrifices. Any attempt to provide the reason(s) for directing these two sections to both groups explicitly would be mere speculation; however, since this particular formulation of the phrase of address specifies that both parties are the intended hearers, one should not attempt to determine which group was the "primary" audience for the following ordinances.

v. 3. **אִישׁ אִישׁ מִבֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל** -- "Anyone of the house of Israel"

The LXX and the Samaritan Pentateuch preserve different traditions by which the four uses of the juridical formula (vv. 3, 8, 10, 13) are brought into agreement of form. The Samaritan Pentateuch, followed by the Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, changes verse 13 to **בְּבֵית**, matching the other verses, from the **בְּבֵית** in the MT. On the other hand, LXX changes verses 3, 8, and 10 to read **τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραὴλ** (= **בְּבֵית יִשְׂרָאֵל**) as in verse 13. The alternation between **בְּבֵית יִשְׂרָאֵל**/**בְּבֵית** is evident throughout the text (i.e., v. 2 = **בְּבֵית**/v. 3 = **בְּבֵית**; v. 10 = **בְּבֵית**/v. 12 = **בְּבֵית**), and does not seem to warrant either emendation.

The LXX further modifies this verse by adding the phrase ἡ τῶν προσηλύτων τῶν προσκειμένων ἐν ὑμῖν, which makes it more completely correspond to verses 8, 10, 13. This is indeed the only one of the four ordinances of Leviticus 17 which is not applied (in the MT) to both Israelite and resident alien. Rather than emending the text, it is preferable to understand the exclusion of the גַּל from this regulation as intentional. This first use of the juridical formula is separated from the remaining three (all of which are applied to the גַּל as well as to the Israelite) by the concluding phrase in verse 7 and the minor structural break at verse 8. On these structural features, and on the use of שָׁחַח שָׁחַח, see below, §3.3 "Structure."

v. 3. שָׁחַח -- "slaughter"

Is a distinction to be made between the use of שָׁחַח in verse 3 and the use of שָׁחַח in verses 5-7? The two are members of a semantic field (which also includes שָׁחַח and שָׁחַח) in which fine distinctions are difficult to make.⁶ Of the major English translations, RSV (שָׁחַח = kill/שָׁחַח = slay),

⁶See especially A. Noordtzij, *Leviticus*. Bible Student's Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982), p. 175; Norman Snaith, "The Verbs *zābah* and *šāhat*," *Vetus Testamentum* 25 (1975), 242-246; Lang et al., "שָׁחַח" TDOT 4: 8-29. Whether this indicates, as most commentators believe, that originally there was no such thing as a non-sacrificial slaughtering in the Ancient Near East is a topic beyond the scope of this present thesis. However, the question whether each verb in a given context (as here) refers to sacrifice as the primary purpose of the slaughter needs to be discussed. On the synonymous use of שָׁחַח and שָׁחַח, see Isa. 66:3.

NKJV (kill/offer), and NAS (slaughter/sacrifice) reflect the use of different Hebrew verbs, while NIV does not (both verbs rendered "sacrifice," verses 3, 5; נָחַם is also translated as "making" in verse 5 and "offer" in verse 7). Wenham's translation distinguishes the two terms, but uses two different words for נָחַם (kill/sacrifice, offer).⁷ *Die Heilige Schrift*, following Luther's translation, uses *schlachten* for both verbs, but translates the noun נָחַם as *Opfern*. Elliger distinguishes שָׁחַט (*schlachten*) from נָחַם (*feiern*).⁸ Martin Noth and Kornfeld translate both verbs as *schlachten* (except for v. 5b, where Noth has *opfern*).⁹

The verb שָׁחַט occurs 36 times in Leviticus (out of 86 times in the OT); in all but one instance (22:28) it is used to denote a cultic act. Outside of Leviticus, the primary force of the verb is slaughter, with sacrifice being a specific application thereof. נָחַם is used only 8 times in Leviticus (out of 134 total occurrences), always in the context of sacrificing.¹⁰ Outside of Leviticus, it is used

⁷Leviticus, p. 239.

⁸Leviticus, p. 218.

⁹Noth, *Das dritte Buch Mose*. Das Alte Testament Deutsch, Band 6. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966), p. 110; Kornfeld, *Levitikus*. Die Neue Echter Bibel. (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1983), p. 67.

¹⁰See Snaith, "Verbs," who states that נָחַם is the usual word for slaughter outside of P, whereas שָׁחַט is the usual P word for ritual slaughter.

almost exclusively for offering sacrifices; where the verb is used non-cultically, it always refers to killing animals.¹¹ Other than in this section¹², these two words are found together only one other time in Leviticus, 22:28-29. The context in chapter 22 is that of regulating when a lamb or calf may be killed. Verse 27 specifies that such an animal is acceptable as an offering by fire (קָרַנֵן אֵשָׁה) from the eighth day on. The next verse, 28, stipulates that the mother and offspring are not to be slaughtered (טָחַטְחַט) on the same day, while verse 29 emphasizes the need to offer sacrifices (קָרַבַּן) in a way that is acceptable to Yahweh. The use of the more specific verb קָרַבַּן in verse 29 may suggest that the killing in verse 28 (טָחַטְחַט) may--but need not--be non-sacrificial in nature. (One can, for instance, conceive of the mother being killed for food while the offspring was sacrificed.) The same may hold true for 17:3-7. The content of the two sub-sections supports this view. Verses 3-4 state that all slaughtering by Israelites is to take place at the sanctuary so as to offer a קָרַבַּן to Yahweh (note that this is not yet referred to as a זֶבַח or זֶבַח־שְׁלָמִים as

¹¹But cf. 2 Kings 23:20, in which the false priests of the northern kingdom are killed (זָבַח) upon their altar, in fulfillment of 1 Kings 13:2.

¹²Which Snaith calls a "hybrid passage . . . making the distinction between the ancient pre-exilic custom whereby the *zabah* could be slaughtered anywhere ('outside the camp'), and the post-exilic (P) custom, when there was no *zabah* at all [only the זֶבַח־שְׁלָמִים]" ("Verbs," p. 246).

in verses 5-7). Verses 5-7 then apply this general stricture to the specific instance of offering sacrifices (זָבַח), which are to be offered only to Yahweh.¹³ The translation provided here therefore distinguishes between these words (שָׁחַט = slaughter, זָבַח = sacrifice; cf. NAS).¹⁴ For an opposing view, see Levine's recent commentary.¹⁵

v. 4. לֹא הֵבִיאוּ -- "he does not bring it"

The Samaritan Pentateuch (followed by LXX) adds לעֲשׂוֹת אַחַר עֲלֵה אוֹ שְׁלָמִים לַיהוָה לְרִצּוֹנְכֶם לְרִיחַ נִיחַח וְיִשְׁחַטְהוּ כַחוֹץ וְאֵל-אַחַר עֲלֵה אוֹ שְׁלָמִים לַיהוָה לְרִצּוֹנְכֶם לְרִיחַ נִיחַח ("to make it a whole-burnt-offering or communion offering to Yahweh for your acceptance for an aroma of appeasement and he slaughters it outside and to the tent of meeting he does not bring it"). One finds in this variant reading words and phrases which seem to have been drawn from the surrounding context: לעֲשׂוֹת אַחַר (v. 9); עֲלֵה אוֹ שְׁלָמִים (v. 8, where זָבַח replaces שְׁלָמִים); לְרִיחַ נִיחַח (v. 6);

¹³See Gary Anderson's claim that this, the לַיהוָה aspect of the cult is what makes it distinctive; but this, he says, is just as the cult of Molech or of Baal is thereby distinctive. (*Sacrifices and Offerings in Ancient Israel. Studies in their Social and Political Importance.* Harvard Semitic Monographs 41 [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987], p. 3).

¹⁴זָבַח is used in a non-sacrificial context only once in the Pentateuch (Deut. 12:15,21). The verb שָׁחַט does not occur at all in Deuteronomy.

¹⁵Baruch A. Levine, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Leviticus* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989), pp. 112-113.

וְיִשְׁחַטְהוּ כֹהֵן (v. 3); and a verbatim repetition of verse 4a. While it is possible that this material was omitted through scribal error (homoioteleuton), it seems more likely that this is a gloss, or series of glosses, which became incorporated into this textual tradition.¹⁶

v. 4. לְהִקְרִיב -- "to offer [it]"

The Samaritan Pentateuch adds an object suffix, ל-, to the verb. The text makes good sense without the emendation.

v. 4. וְנִחַן יָמָו -- "blood will be imputed"

According to Gerhard von Rad, this imputing or reckoning took the form of a formulaic declaration by the priest.¹⁷ The actual evidence supporting this claim is scarce (other than here, cf. Lev. 7:18), and von Rad's view has been rejected by K. Seybold.¹⁸ Nevertheless, these verses (7:18 and 17:4) demand consideration as the only ones in Leviticus where וְנִחַן is not directly concerned with valuation of property. They are more in line with the statements in Genesis concerning how a person is regarded (Gen. 31:15; 38:15), or those in Numbers which speak of how

¹⁶Cf. Elliger, who calls it a "secondary expansion" (*Leviticus*, 219).

¹⁷"Faith Reckoned as Righteousness," in *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Studies*. Translated by E. W. T. Dicken. (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1965), p. 126.

¹⁸K. Seybold, "וְנִחַן," TDOT 5: 228-245.

the offerings of the Levites were regarded (Num. 18:27,30). The connection between these uses of נָשָׂא is the notion of value judgement. So Laban looks upon his daughters as if they were foreigners (Gen. 31:15) and Judah considers the disguised Tamar to be a prostitute (Gen. 38:15); the offering of the Levites, which came from that which they had received as servants of the Tabernacle, is accepted as if it had come from their fields (if they had any) (Num. 18:27, 30). Job 35:2 and Proverbs 27:14 each speaks of something being regarded as its opposite: Job regards his "unjust" suffering as "justice," trusting in the Lord for righteousness; and Proverbs shows how an improper blessing is in fact reckoned as a curse. Psalm 32:2 and 2 Samuel 19:20 speak of guilt not being "reckoned" or "imputed." Seybold takes all these cases (except those from Genesis) as instances of reckoning something to someone's account¹⁹; but the language of accounting is not really necessary here.²⁰ These passages speak not so much of a business transaction as of the way something is looked upon or regarded.

It is in this way that Lev. 7:18 and 17:4 are to be understood. Both passages refer to violations of sacrificial law. In the first, the sacrifice (זֶבֶחַ שְׁלָמִים) is not

¹⁹TDOT 5: 234.

²⁰Cf. TDNT 4: 284-285, where Heidland suggests that nuances of subjective reckoning is alien to the Greek use of λογίζομαι, the standard Greek rendering of נָשָׂא.

eaten within the appointed time. In such a case, the one offering it is not accepted (הֲרָצָה; cf. 1:4), and לֹא יִחָשֵׁב לוֹ, "it is not reckoned/imputed to him." The referent of the verb is unclear, but most likely it refers to the benefit of the sacrifice. In the present instance (17:4), the meaning is clearly "that man (who slaughters an animal away from the tabernacle) will be considered to be guilty of bloodshed," the consequences of which follow. This verse is strikingly similar to Gen. 15:6:

וְדָם יִחָשֵׁב לְאִישׁ הַהוּא -- blood will be reckoned to that man
 וַיִּחָשֵׁב לוֹ צְדָקָה -- and he reckoned to him righteousness²¹

As von Rad suggests, these verses serve as powerful opposing statements, one of guilt, the other of innocence. But one need not propose (as von Rad does) a priestly declaration as the basis for either or both.

v. 4. וְדָם שָׁפַךְ וְנִכְרַת הָאִישׁ הַהוּא -- "he has spilled blood, and that man will be cut off"

This material is missing from the Cairo Geniza manuscript, probably due to homoioteleuton.

v. 4. וְדָם שָׁפַךְ -- "he has shed blood"

Of the seven occurrences of this phrase in Leviticus,

²¹Although it is normal to take an implied אָמֵן as the direct object of the verb (cf. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15. Word Biblical Commentary, Vol. 1* [Waco: Word Book Publishers, 1982], pp. 329-330), it is perhaps better to construct the phrase as proposed here, taking the object suffix as pointing proleptically towards צְדָקָה, which is placed at the end for emphasis. The lack of a comparative particle supports this view.

only here does it bear the sense of "murder" (cf. Gen. 9:6). It underlines the importance of blood being the possession of Yahweh, with which he can do as he pleases. In the case of the blood of sacrificial animals, it was to be poured at the foot of the altar (4:7, 18, 25, 30, 34 -- this was for the זָבַח; for the others, the blood was to be splashed [קָרַח] upon the altar); for wild game it was to be poured out upon the earth and covered up (17:13). In the case envisioned here, the blood comes from an animal which is of an acceptable kind for sacrifice, but is treated as if it came from a wild animal, with the result that the one who has so slaughtered such an animal is guilty of shedding blood.

v. 4. מִקֶּרֶב עַמּוֹ ... וְנִכְרַת -- "and he will be cut off from among his people"

Wenham takes this statement to indicate that Yahweh himself will carry out the sentence.²² Others take the phrase as being a sentence of death²³ or of expulsion from the community.²⁴ That Yahweh himself carries out the sentence does not preclude either of the latter options; nor is it at variance with either the priests or the community

²²Wenham, *Leviticus*, p. 242.

²³Cf. Noordtziij, *Leviticus*, p. 177.

²⁴von Rad, *Theologie des Alten Testaments. Band I: Die Theologie der geschichtlichen Überlieferungen Israels* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1957), p. 263 n.174.

being the means through which Yahweh works.²⁵ Whether the death penalty or expulsion is intended cannot be determined from the text. While Exod. 31:14 places $\Pi\Gamma\Gamma$ in synonymous parallelism to $\Pi\Gamma$, other passages (i.e., Gen 17:14; Exod. 12:15, 17) would seem to indicate that excommunication is the main intent. It may not be helpful to distinguish between these forms of punishment too finely, since to be cut off from the people of God (among whom God provides his means of grace) would, theologically, be tantamount to a sentence of death.²⁶

v. 4. $\text{וְהָיָה אִם יִקְרַח מִן עַמּוֹ$ -- "that man from among his people"

The LXX reads $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$ (= $\Psi\Gamma$) for וְהָיָה , with the corresponding shift to the feminine possessive pronoun, $\alpha\upsilon\tau\eta\varsigma$ (= הָ), with וְעַל (cf. v. 10). The introduction of $\Psi\Gamma$ into this section of the text seems unwarranted.

²⁵Wenham makes the point that in many instances the transgression will not be known to the community. In such instances, Yahweh himself must be the one acting to carry out this sentence; but if the sin becomes known, surely it is incumbent upon the community to act? From a theological viewpoint, excommunication and the death sentence are not mutually exclusive, since death, theologically speaking, is to be cut off eternally from God and his people. Whether there is the possibility of reconciliation for such a one is a matter for another thesis.

²⁶See Levine's useful discussion of this phrase in *Leviticus*, pp. 241-242. He notes that the phrase can mean either "to put to death" or "to exile," and further notes that it is implied that should human agencies fail to punish the offender, God would do so himself.

v. 5. **למען אשר** -- "so that"

The use of **למען** indicates that the relationship of verses 3-4 to verses 5-7 is one of purpose or result (cf. Williams §367f.).²⁷ As Anneli Aejmelaesus has observed concerning the use of **כִּי**, the Hebrew language does not formally distinguish between these circumstantial uses of particles.²⁸ Its use in this instance causes some translation problems, in that the immediate precedent is the curse formula, rather than the prohibition itself. **על-כן** might have been better suited (cf. v. 12), but **למען אשר** perhaps conveys more clearly the intimacy of the two regulations. Most translators insert either a demonstrative pronoun ("this is so that . . .")²⁹ or a summary phrase ("*Dies wird angeordnet*")³⁰ to convey the idea of the Hebrew.

²⁷While a causal use of the particle is possible (Williams §366), it seems unlikely, since the movement is from general to specific ordinance, rather than specific to general.

²⁸Anneli Aejmelaesus, "Function and Interpretation of **כִּי** in Biblical Hebrew," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 105 (1986), 193-209.

²⁹Wenham, *Leviticus*, p. 239; Noordtzij, *Leviticus*, p. 174.

³⁰Noth, *Das dritte Buch Mose*, p. 110. Kornfeld opts instead for a more resultative *daher*, rather than the other translations which are more purposive (*Levitikus*, p. 67).

v. 5. ׀ַכְּבִּי -- "sacrificing"

Elliger follows GKA (§116a) in ascribing contemporaneous, continuative force to the participle. (Cf. Williams §213.) This would indicate that the reason for the prohibition in verses 3-4 is that there is an ongoing problem of pagan sacrifices. (Cf. verse 7, ׀ַכְּבִּי.)

v. 6. ׀ַהֲרֵי אֲלֹהֵי יְהוָה -- "the altar of Yahweh"

The LXX adds κύκλω ἀπέναντι (= ׀ַכְּבִּי לְפָנַי, "round about before") after ׀ַהֲרֵי. This appears to be a conjunction of phrases used in chapters 1 and 3, although never together (׀ַכְּבִּי, cf. 1:6, 3:2; לְפָנַי, cf. 1:3, 3:1). Its insertion changes the sense of the text, which in the MT is to emphasize that this takes place at the altar of Yahweh, rather than at a pagan shrine. (The Samaritan Pentateuch also adds אֲשֶׁר after ׀ַהֲרֵי, which is not necessary for the sense of the text.)

v. 6. ׀ַהֲחַלֵּב הַחֵלֶב -- "burn the fat"

The Cairo Geniza manuscript is missing ׀ַהֲחַלֵּב.

v. 6. לְרִיחַ נִיחֹחַ לִיהוָה -- "for an aroma of appeasement to Yahweh"

This is the purpose phrase found throughout Leviticus 1-3 for specifying the reason for the ׀ַלָּה, the מִנְחָה, and the ׀ַלְמִיץ. Most translations render it "a pleasing aroma to Yahweh," but, as Noordtzijs has indicated, the connection is

with appeasing God's wrath rather than pleasing his palate.³¹ The key verse for understanding this phrase is Gen. 8:21: "And Yahweh smelled the aroma of appeasement [of the הָלַל] and Yahweh said to his heart, 'Not again will I curse the ground . . .'"³² The sacrifice here turns aside God's wrath, and this is the sense that seems to be picked up in Leviticus 1-3 and 17. (In contrast, cf. Lev. 26:31, where, in order to show his rejection of the sacrifice, Yahweh refuses to smell the aroma of appeasement.)

v. 7. סַרְסַרִים -- *se'rim*

Snaith has called into question the accuracy of speaking about "goat-demons" or "satyrs," which he sees as being part of a Latin/Greek mythology.³³ He prefers instead to trace this word back to a different root (סַרַסַר) which is related to the latter rains. They are then understood as Canaanite fertility or rain deities (so also Deut. 32:2; 2 Chron. 11:15). This would indicate a Canaanite, rather than an Egyptian, influence on the

³¹Noordtzijs, *Leviticus*, p. 38; cf. Wenham, *Leviticus*, p. 56.

³²On parallels between this passage and the Gilgamesh epic, see John C. L. Gibson, *Genesis, Vol. 1. Daily Study Bible of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981), pp. 178-185; Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, pp. 159-166.

³³N. H. Snaith, "The Meaning of סַרְסַרִים," *Vetus Testamentum* 25 (1975), pp. 115-118.

Israelite's personal piety at the time of the Exodus.³⁴

While this suggestion is interesting, it does not materially alter the meaning of the verse, which is not so much concerned with the specific object of the Israelites' sacrifices, but rather with the fact that they are not sacrificing to Yahweh alone.

v. 8. מְבֵית יִשְׂרָאֵל -- "of the house of Israel"

See above, verse 3.

v. 8. בְּתוֹכָם -- "among them"

The LXX, Syriac, and Vulgate all change the suffix to the second person plural, "among you." In chapter 17, the use of the second person plural is restricted to the direct quotes in verses 12 and 14, and to verse 11b. Elsewhere, the ordinances are given in the third person, thus making the MT preferable to the variants.

v. 8. יַעֲלֶה -- "offers"

This is the usual idiom for offering an עֹלָה (cf. Ug., *Aqhat* I, 4:23,30, where *s'ly* [= עֹלָה] is used of offering a *dbh* [= בָּחַבִּי³⁵). The Samaritan Pentateuch and the LXX read יַעֲשֶׂה ("make an עֹלָה") as in verse 9.

³⁴Contra C. F. Keil, *The Pentateuch. Biblical Commentary on the OT. Translated by James Martin.* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1864 [1956 reprint]); Harrison, *Leviticus. Historical critics would find in this evidence for the lateness of Leviticus.*

³⁵Cf. Snaith, "Verbs," pp. 242-243.

vv. 10-12.

This entire section is missing from the Cairo Geniza manuscript. The most likely reason is homoiarchton, where the scribe jumped to the following $\Psi\text{אי}\Psi\text{אי}$ in verse 13.

v. 10. מכית ישראל -- "of the house of Israel"

See above, verse 3.

v. 10. בתוכם -- "among them"

See above, verse 8.

v. 10. כל-דם -- "any blood"

The -ל is omitted by LXX, Syriac and Vulgate, as in verse 12. Its presence in the MT serves as emphasis.

v. 10-14. נפש -- "person/life"³⁶

It is to be noted that until this verse, the word נפש has not been used in this chapter, and even here the juridical formula remains $\Psi\text{אי}\Psi\text{אי}$. In the following five verses, it occurs 8 times: 5 times in a blood-life relationship clause; twice as the object of God's judgement (v. 10) or forgiveness (v. 11); and once in the formulaic כל-נפש מכם (v. 12; cf. v. 15). In only one instance (v. 11c) is the referent of the נפש unclear. The shift from $\Psi\text{אי}$ to נפש in

³⁶For discussion of the various uses of נפש , see especially Hans Walter Wolff, *Anthropology of the Old Testament*. Translated by Margaret Kohl (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974); Seebass, " נפש ," TWAT 5: 531-555; Claus Westermann, *Theologisches Hand Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament, Band 2* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1976), pp. 71-96.

verses 10 and 12 is problematic for translation: while in verse 10 one can render the text "against the life of the one eating" (with "person who eats" understood as the force of the phrase), verse 12 poses difficulties. Does one render it "any life of you" ("soul," as used by the AV, would solve the translation problem, but impose a foreign metaphysic) or simply "any one of you" and lose the impact of the use of $\Psi\text{נ]$? The latter option is preferred here, but the importance of seeing a person ($\Psi\text{א}$) as a life ($\Psi\text{נ]$) should not be overlooked when discussing the passage.

v. 11. $\text{א הוּא כְּרֵם בְּדָם}$ -- "life is the blood"

The MT takes א הוּא as a feminine ($h\dot{a}'$),³⁷ and thereby refers it back to $\Psi\text{נ]$. It is thus resumptive, and serves as a copula³⁸ with emphasis on the predicate (כְּרֵם).

v. 11. כְּרֵם -- "[in/as] the blood"

The LXX reads a pronominal suffix, as in verse 14 (כְּרֵמוֹ).

v. 11. לְכַפֵּר -- "to atone"

Much ink has been spilled in arguing over the meaning

³⁷On the undifferentiated pronoun א הוּא in the Pentateuch see G. A. Rendsburg, "A New Look at Pentateuchal *HW*," *Biblica* 63 (1982), pp. 351-369.

³⁸On א הוּא serving this function, see Williams §115; GKa §141f, h. Also, Takamitsu Muraoka, *Emphatic Words and Structures in Biblical Hebrew* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1985), pp. 181-182.

of כַּפֵּר. The majority of these discussions seek to determine meaning on the basis of etymology.³⁹ Of greater importance is the use of the word in the OT, particularly in passages related to this one. When these passages are taken into consideration, Milgrom understands the meaning of this phrase as "to ransom."⁴⁰ The understanding of the author of Leviticus is perhaps best seen in the use of the phrase וְכִפֶּר עֲלֵהֶם הַכֹּהֵן וְנִסְלַח לָהֶם ("and the priest will atone for them and it will be forgiven them," 4:20 [and par.]). While atonement and forgiveness are not identical, they are inter-related: because of the atonement, there is forgiveness.⁴¹

³⁹See especially Milgrom, "Atonement in the OT," in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible. Supplementary Volume* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976), p. 78; Janowski, *Sühne als Heilsgeschehen: Studien zur Sühnetheologie der Priesterschrift und zur Wurzel KPR im Alten Orient und im Alten Testament* (Neukirchener Verlag, 1982), pp. 27-275; Gray, *Sacrifice in the Old Testament: Its Theory and Practice* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925), pp. 67-76.

⁴⁰"A Prolegomenon to Lev. 17:11," in *Studies in Cultic Theology and Terminology* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1983), p. 98, following the use of the phrase כַּפֵּר עַל-עֲוֹנוֹתָיִךְ in Ex. 30:15-16 and Num. 31:50. Cf., Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1965), p. 166.

⁴¹Milgrom ("Prolegomenon") correctly points out that the phrase וְנִסְלַח . . . וְכִפֶּר is specifically associated with the אָטָה and not with the שָׁלוּחַ; this is the source of his "contradiction": how can this expiatory force be ascribed to a non-expiatory sacrifice? Lev. 17:11 seems to indicate that the expiation/atonement is not necessarily limited by the kind of sacrifice involved, but rather is linked to the blood which in all bloody sacrifices is placed or splashed or poured upon the altar.

v. 11. וְהָיָה הַדָּם לְחַיֵּי הַבָּשָׂר -- "the blood is for the life"

There has been considerable debate over the use of the \beth in verses 11a, 11c, and 14. The various possibilities will be explored in detail in the next chapter. Here it is sufficient to outline the possibilities.

For verse 11a there are two options.

1. *beth of location*. This has been the traditional translation: "the life of the flesh is in the blood" (Ger. *ist [sitz] im Blut*).

2. *beth of essence*. This use of the \beth , which has been disputed by Brichto⁴², is preferred by Milgrom and Rodriguez. It yields the translation, "the life of the flesh is the blood." It shows a closer identification between the two elements than a locative function.

With respect to verse 11c, the locative use of \beth is not a serious possibility⁴³; but there are three alternatives.

1. *beth of essence*. "The blood is life." This is preferred by Milgrom, who contends that the use of the \beth is "exactly the same in each clause."⁴⁴ It is also the translation adopted by the NJPS.

2. *beth of instrument*. "The blood through/by means of

⁴²"On Slaughter," p. 26.

⁴³But cf. Luther's translation: *Denn das Blut ist die Entsöhnung, weil das Leben in ihm ist.*

⁴⁴"Prolegomenon," p. 96.

the life." This has been the dominant understanding of the phrase (cf. Janowski, Stanislas Lyonnet, and Rendtorff. Keil argues that] with]]] can only have a locative or an instrumental function.⁴⁵

3. *beth of price*. "The blood is for the life." Technically, this is a specific application of the instrumental use (cf. GKa §119o,p; Williams §246). It makes explicit the idea of exchange or substitution (although the latter is denied by Brichto). It is preferred by Brichto, Levine, and Rodriguez.

To debate over the use of prepositions is to focus on the minutiae and ignore the primary questions. In the case of verse 11a, the meaning is not ultimately at stake when choosing between the locative and essential uses of]. The use of the] indicates a very close relationship between blood and life, such that the two may, to some extent, be identified. More than this cannot be said.⁴⁶

More is on the line in verse 11c, as the function of the] would materially affect the meaning of the clause.

⁴⁵Cf. Keil, *Pentateuch*, p. 410.

⁴⁶The underlying issue is at least partially one of anthropology and metaphysics. If looked at from an Aristotelian framework, this verse would indicate that the blood is the seat of the soul; cf. Luther and Oecolampadius at Marburg. But as others have shown, such a metaphysic is foreign to the Hebrew *Weltanschauung*. (See above, n. 36; also Walter Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*. Translated by John Baker [Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967], pp. 134-142.)

But, as has already been noted in reference to לַמַּעַן (v. 5), Hebrew does not distinguish formally between functions of a preposition. The real question is not the function of the ׀, but the referent of the וְפִי] and its relationship to ׀הָרָה and ׀נִפְרָג׀.

1. The וְפִי] may refer either to the וְפִי] of the animal which is killed (//11a) or to the וְפִי] of the one for whom the sacrifice is made (//11b). If the former is the case, then the only possibilities are the essential or instrumental uses of ׀.⁴⁷ If the one offering is the referent, then the ׀ of price or exchange is to be preferred.

2. The relationship of the וְפִי]] may be either with ׀הָרָה or with the ׀נִפְרָג׀. If it belongs with the former, the ׀ may function as either essential or exchange. If with the verb, the ׀ is instrumental in function, which would also allow for a ׀ of exchange/price.⁴⁸

The following chart shows how these possibilities work out.

<u>וְפִי]]</u>	<u>--> ׀הָרָה</u>	<u>--> ׀נִפְרָג׀</u>
of victim:	׀ <i>essentiae</i>	׀ <i>instrumenti</i>
of offerer:	׀ <i>pretii</i>	׀ <i>pretii</i>

⁴⁷Brichto, however, with his understanding of the verse as a case of composition, takes it to be a *beth pretii*, by which the blood of the animal is given as payment for its וְפִי].

⁴⁸The phrase ׀ נִפְרָג׀ always has an instrumental or locative force, as Keil indicated (p. 410). The *beth* of exchange is not used in this phrase elsewhere, nor is the *beth* of essence.

The translation provided takes the VPJ as referring to that of the one for whom atonement is made; it further takes the phrase $\text{V}\text{P}\text{J}\text{J}$ as being in relationship to DH rather than the verb.⁴⁹ However, the ambiguity of the phrase needs to be acknowledged and used as a key in understanding the verse. (See below, §4.2.3.2 "Textual Ambiguity in Lev. 17:11c.")

v. 11. KH DH -- "the blood is"

Takamitsu Muraoka observes that "some uncertainty remains as regards" this phrase.⁵⁰ It may serve a similar function as the KH in verse 11a, that of a copula.⁵¹ It may also serve simply to emphasize the subject (cf. Isa. 7:14), and so be best left untranslated. The function of the KH has a direct bearing on how the entire clause is to be understood (i.e., in determining the function of the J and the referent of the $\text{V}\text{P}\text{J}\text{J}$). It is taken here to be a copula joining DH to $\text{V}\text{P}\text{J}\text{J}$: "the blood is for the life." See below, §4.1, "Structure."

v. 13. $\text{M}\text{N}\text{N}\text{I}$ $\text{Y}\text{I}\text{S}\text{R}\text{A}\text{E}\text{L}$ -- "of the sons of Israel"

See above, verse 3.

⁴⁹This is how the phrase was understood by LXX, as indicated by its use of the preposition $\alpha\upsilon\tau\iota$.

⁵⁰*Emphatic Words*, p. 66 n.26.

⁵¹Cf. Muraoka, *Emphatic Words*, p. 81.

v. 13. ׁתו ׁכ -- "among them"

See above, verse 8. In addition to the variant texts cited there, the following alter this verse only: minor manuscripts of the Samaritan Pentateuch; minor manuscripts of the Targums; and the Targum Pseudo-Jonathan. The increased number of variant texts may be due to the proximity of second person commands in verses 12 and 14.

v. 14. ׁפּׁ -- "its life it is"

This phrase, which is technically redundant, is omitted by LXX, Syriac, and Vulgate. Elliger⁵² suggests following the variants, taking the phrase as an incorrect addition meant to emphasize the ׁתּ. It may be explained as a gloss which was added to the text (cf. v. 4); but the agreement of both MT and Samaritan Pentateuch suggests that the text should be kept as it appears. (The only use of the ׁ that gives good sense to this phrase is the ׁ of essence.)

v. 14. ׁל-אׁלׁ -- "anyone eating"

Here the variant אׁל (Samaritan Pentateuch, LXX, Syriac, Targum, and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan) is followed. Aside from the weight of witnesses, the agreement of the singular participle with the singular verb which follows (ׁל) makes it preferable. As the MT reads, it modifies the plural verb preceding it (אׁלׁ).

⁵²*Leviticus*, p. 219.

v. 15. 7707 -- "and he will be clean"

This verb is omitted in the Samaritan Pentateuch, perhaps as being unnecessary.

3.3 Structure

3.3.1 Position of Leviticus 17

Before discussing the structure of Leviticus 17 in general it is important to establish the position of this chapter in the structure of the Book of Leviticus. The question whether chapter 17 should properly be understood in connection with what precedes it (chs. 1-16) or with what follows (chs. 18-27, the so-called "Holiness Code" [H]) has implications for how its content is to be understood.

Since the late eighteenth century, it has been the dominant opinion that Leviticus 17 is the first chapter of what, following Klostermann, is called the "Holiness Code" (*Heiligkeitsgesetz*).⁵³ G.H. Davies includes a sermonic style and the use of the first person for Yahweh as characteristics of H.⁵⁴ Noth joins chapter 17 with what follows on the grounds that there is no other lengthy

⁵³Cf. Brevard Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), p. 176. For more detailed analysis of the various issues connected with a discussion of H, the reader is directed to the works of Kornfeld (*Studien*), Reventlow (*Heiligkeitsgesetz*), Kilian (*Literarkritische*) and Feucht (*Untersuchungen*).

⁵⁴"Leviticus," *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, 3: 121.

collection to which these chapters could have belonged.⁵⁵

Joseph Seiss deals with chapters 17-20 as a unit, since they share what he considers to be the common theme of personal or private piety.⁵⁶ Snaith, while hedging on the question of an independent existence for H, notes that it parallels the Book of the Covenant (Exod. 20:22-23:33) in that both begin with sacrificial regulations.⁵⁷ Even Horace Hummel maintains the label H for Leviticus 17-26, though he seeks to rid it of its evolutionary presuppositions.⁵⁸

There have been various attempts to modify this view of H as a distinct entity. Baentsch, observing differences within H (e.g., no closing formula in 17), suggested further deconstruction of the text into three different strands: Pha

⁵⁵*Das dritte Buch Mose*, p. 109.

⁵⁶*The Gospel in Leviticus*. (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1860), p. 303.

⁵⁷*Leviticus and Numbers*. Century Bible (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1967), p. 22.

⁵⁸*The Word Becoming Flesh*. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1979), pp. 83-84. Hummel, while including ch. 17 with H in his book, discussed it in connection with chs. 1-7 and 16 in his class, *Exegesis of Leviticus*, St. Louis: Concordia Seminary, Fall 1989. Harrison avoids the label H in his introduction, although he does group ch. 17 with what follows (*Introduction to the Old Testament*. [Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1969], p. 590). In his later commentary, Harrison emphasizes the unity of the whole book of Leviticus (*Leviticus*, pp. 25-26, 177-178); structurally, however, he keeps 17 with what follows.

(=17); Phb (=18-20); and Phc (=21-22).⁵⁹ Others, such as Wenham,⁶⁰ Francis Nichol,⁶¹ and Milgrom⁶² see Leviticus 17 as being distinct from H. Nichol associates 17 with chapter 16 as does Milgrom, who notes the thematic and verbal affinity of chapter 17 with what precedes it while at the same time observing the differences between Leviticus 1-16 and 17-26. Wenham calls chapter 17 "a hinge linking the two halves of the book,"⁶³ a view shared by Cotton,⁶⁴ who underscores the similarities between chapters 16 and 17 on the one hand, and between 17 and 18 on the other. Far more radical is the position of Noordtzij which calls into question the existence of a "Holiness Code" *per se*.⁶⁵ His

⁵⁹*Handkommentar*, pp. 387-388.

⁶⁰*Leviticus*, p. 7, following Hoffmann and Kilian.

⁶¹*Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 1 (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1953), p. 697.

⁶²"Leviticus," in *IDBSup.*, p. 543.

⁶³*Leviticus*, p. 241.

⁶⁴"Rhetorical and Thematic Structures," pp. 22-23.

⁶⁵*Leviticus*, pp. 8-9. His view is essentially that of Hummel, Cotton, and, to a lesser extent, Wenham. The difference lies in the willingness of these other scholars to maintain the label H as a marker for a distinct unit of the text (providing that it be divorced it from its critical assumptions), while Noordtzij is less inclined to keep the label, and attempts to emphasize the lack of unity in this

evidence against the existence of H is two-fold: (1) a lack of evidence indicating a separate source (such as may be found in Exod. 19:24 and 24:1 which mark off the Book of the Covenant); and (2) no systematic organization of the material in 17-26. To this one might add Heinisch's observation that the various formulae used in H are not unique to it.

Where the scholars disagree, one may still gain insight from the text itself. The following words and phrases (and their variants) which are used in Leviticus 17 may provide the necessary evidence for deciding where chapter 17 properly belongs: (1) וַיִּרְכַּךְ יְהוָה; (2) רָכַךְ אֱלֹ-; (3) אִישׁ אִישׁ; (4) מִקְרָב עִמּוֹ; (5) רָם; and (6) נִפְרָ.⁶⁶

וַיִּרְכַּךְ יְהוָה (17:1). David Baker⁶⁷ notes this phrase as one of the key structural markers of Leviticus 1-7, but it is found throughout the book. It provides a macropattern for Leviticus, marking out the larger units of text that belong together. Cotton lists all the uses of this phrase

section.

⁶⁶The phrase וַיִּרְכַּךְ יְהוָה, which is used repeatedly in Leviticus 18-26 (50x: ch. 18=6x; 19=16x; 20=4x; 21=4x; 22=9x; 23=2x; 24=1x; 25=3x; 26=5x), is found only at 11:44,45 in the first seventeen chapters of the book. It does not show up at all in chs. 1-7, 16, or 17.

⁶⁷"Division Markers and The Structure of Leviticus 1-7," *Studia Biblica* 1 (1978): 9-15.

with the units of text they mark out.⁶⁸ It is used 18 times in chapters 1-16 and 16 times in 18-27. The use of this marker throughout the book indicates a structural harmony which makes it difficult to distinguish any "independent" unit, such as H, within the text. The most that can be said is that the final product is such that, if Leviticus is composed from earlier documents, they have been so well assimilated into the pattern of the book as to be structurally indistinguishable.⁶⁹

Neither Baker nor Cotton goes far enough, however. Going back to the Book of Exodus, the same phrase which occurs in Lev. 17:1, *וַיִּרְאֶה יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה*, serves as a structure marker in the following verses: 13:1; 14:1; 24:1 ("and he said"), 25:1; 32:7; 33:1; and 40:1. (The fact that this phrase is also used to mark smaller divisions of text in Exodus [i.e., 30:11,17, 22; 31:1] indicates that it may be used in this same way in Leviticus [i.e., 5:14,20; 23:9,23,26,33].) Furthermore, the semantic equivalent *וַיִּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה* marks distinct units of text in Exodus at 6:1; 12:1,43; 34:1,27. It also marks each event in the course of the ten visitations on Egypt in Exodus 7-11, as well as being an indicator of conversation within the narrative (i.e. Exod. 4:9,19,21). In Exod. 20:1 the unique phrase

⁶⁸"Rhetorical and Thematic Structures," p. 14.

⁶⁹Cf. Milgrom, "Leviticus," p. 543.

וַיִּרְכַּךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת כָּל-הַרְכָּרִים marks out the beginning of the Book of the Covenant (Exod. 20-23).⁷⁰ When comparing H to the Book of the Covenant, however, it should not be overlooked that from Exod. 20:1 to Exod. 23:33 there are no structural markers save the one at the beginning to indicate a distinct unit. (Exodus 20:18-21 may or may not be viewed as disruptive of the unity of chs. 20-23, hence the different *terminus a quo* in Noordtzij from that in Snaith.) This is in contrast to H, which has sixteen different uses of the marker indicating distinct units.

This phrase in Lev. 17:1 marks the chapter as being part of a pattern that extends back at least to Exodus 6. (The table below contains a list of the major structural markers in Exodus and Leviticus.) The pattern may also be seen extending forward into the Book of Numbers (i.e., 1:1; 2:1; 3:5; 4:1; 5:1; etc.). The implication of this is that the text of these three books are intended to be read as a unit, a continuous narrative from the call of Moses to the journey's end on the plains of Moab. Whether one ascribes this unity to the original intent of a single author or sees only the hand of a later redactor will be determined by one's hermeneutical presuppositions.

⁷⁰Following Noordtzij, *Leviticus*, p. 8; cf. Snaith, *Leviticus and Numbers*, p. 22, who begins the Book of the Covenant at Exod. 20:22.

Use of "And Yahweh Spoke (to Moses)"
as a Major Division Marker in Exodus and Leviticus

Ex. 6:1	וַיֹּאמֶר	Lv. 1:1	וַיְרַבֵּךְ	Lv. 17:1	וַיְרַבֵּךְ
12:1	"	4:1	"	18:1	"
12:43	"	6:1	"	19:1	"
13:1	וַיְרַבֵּךְ	7:22	"	20:1	"
14:1	"	7:28	"	21:1	וַיֹּאמֶר
20:1	"	8:1	"	21:16	וַיְרַבֵּךְ
24:1	"	11:1	"	22:1	"
25:1	"	12:1	"	22:17	"
32:7	"	13:1	"	22:26	"
33:1	"	14:1	"	23:1	"
34:1	וַיֹּאמֶר	14:33	"	24:1	"
34:27	"	15:1	"	25:1	"
40:1	וַיְרַבֵּךְ	16:1	"	27:1	"
		(16:2)	וַיֹּאמֶר		

On the basis of this phrase, no conclusions may be drawn concerning the position of chapter 17 in the Book of Leviticus. Doubt is cast, however, upon the appropriateness of considering H (Lev. 17/18-26) to be an independent unit, since this phrase is used as a structural marker throughout Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers.

2. וַיְרַבֵּךְ (17:2). Baker notes that this phrase often follows the one just discussed and, like its predecessor, is "syntactically unrelated to [its] context and do[es] not indicate the context of the headed passage."⁷¹ Cotton considers the use of this phrase and its variants an even stronger indication of the unity of the book than the opening formula "because they are more specific and demonstrate choices of variety within unity."⁷² The phrase

⁷¹"Division Markers," p. 10.

⁷²"Rhetorical and Thematic Structures," pp. 14-15. Cotton provides a summary of all the uses of the phrase and its variants where they appear with the opening formula in his Appendix (pp. 128-129).

-לך or its equivalent occurs 15 times in Leviticus 1-16 and 17 times in chapters 18-27. The specific phrase -לך occurs seven times in Exodus (6:11,29; 14:2,15; 16:12; 25:2; 31:13) and 14 times in Numbers (5:6,12; 6:2,23; 8:2; 9:10; 15:2,18,38; 16:24; 17:17; 19:2; 33:51; 35:10), each time following the phrase יהוה or its equivalent. (The variant -לך () found in Lev. 17:8 is otherwise used only in Lev. 20:2 and Num. 11:18.) Like the opening phrase, this one need not mark a major division of the text, but may be used to indicate discourse within a section. Its use throughout the Exodus-Leviticus-Numbers text supports the view that upholds the unity of the three books. And, as Cotton indicates, the non-rigidity of the use of this phrase-type, and the number of its variants (both in specific wording and in the object of the preposition) suggests that this was not a formulation forced upon a group of unrelated texts by a later redactor, but are integral parts of the original narrative.⁷³

3. וְכִּי (17:3,8,10,13). At first glance, this phrase seems to indicate a closer tie between chapter 17 and the ensuing chapters than with those that precede it. The double וְכִּי is found only at 15:2 in the first sixteen chapters, but is used six times in 18-27 (18:6; 20:2,9; 22:4,18; 24:15). It is not found in a juridical context in Exodus (only once in the book, 36:4), but it is used this

⁷³"Rhetorical and Thematic Structures," pp. 14-15.

way five times in Numbers (1:4; 4:19,49; 5:12; 9:10). In all cases it is an indicator of casuistic law.⁷⁴ The four occurrences in Leviticus 17 mark the greatest concentration of the phrase in the book, and, given its general infrequency, makes the decision whether to join chapter 17 to what precedes or what follows slightly more difficult. If one groups it with the latter, the result is that the phrase appears to be virtually unique to H in the Book of Leviticus. However, if 17 is considered part of 1-16, the phrase is equally divided between the two sections. At most, two conclusions may be drawn: (1) the phrase וְאִי־שׁוֹאֵי is used as a structural marker in Leviticus 17 to a greater extent than in any other section of the text; and (2) the use of the phrase indicates an affinity between chapter 17 and chapters 18-27, but does not exclude ties with the first sixteen chapters.

4.וְ . . . (הַאִי־שׁוֹ) וְנִכְרַת (17:4,9). Variants of this phrase occur also at verse 14 (כִּי־נִפְשׁוּ . . . יִכְרַת) and verse 10 (וְהִכְרַת־י . . . וְ). It states the consequences of violating a divine proscription. The verb כָּרַת is used in

⁷⁴Cotton, "Rhetorical and Thematic Structures," pp. 17-18. He further notes that וְנִפְשׁוּ "is much more equally distributed between chapters 1-16 and 17-26" as a marker of casuistic statements. Baker ("Division Markers," pp. 10, 14-15) takes the use of a clause begun by כִּי־נִפְשׁוּ/אִי־שׁוֹ followed by a series of וְ clauses to be indicative of the structure of the casuistic regulations concerning sacrifice in Leviticus 1-5. This structure is not carried beyond these chapters, indicating that there is no one formula which is used exclusively to introduce casuistic law.

four basic ways in the Exodus-Leviticus-Numbers narrative: in the standard formula "to cut a covenant" (כרת ברית); the simple meaning of cutting (with teeth, axe, etc.); as an idiom for destroy; and in this punishment formula. As a formula for punishment, it occurs either as a *niphal* (third person of the one being punished) or as a *hiphil* (first person of Yahweh). Usually it refers to cutting off either a man (איש) or his נפש; that from which he is cut off is most often his people (עם). The following table summarizes all these occurrences.

Variants and Usage of כרת -
as a Punishment Formula in
Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers

	<u>Verse</u>	<u>Form</u>	Dir. Obj.	Ind. Obj.		<u>Verse</u>	<u>Form</u>	Dir. Obj.	Ind. Obj.
Ex.	12:15	N	נפש	ישראל	Lv.	19:8	N	נפש	עם
	12:19	N	"	"		20:3	H	איש	"
	30:33	N	איש	עם		20:5	H	"	"
	30:38	N	"	"		20:6	H	נפש	"
	31:14	N	נפש	"		20:17	N	איש	-
Lv.	7:20	N	"	"		20:18	N	"	עם
	7:21	N	"	"		22:3	N	נפש	מלפני
	7:25	N	"	"		23:29	N	"	עם
	7:27	N	"	"	Nu.	9:13	N	"	"
	17:4	N	איש	"		15:30	N	"	"
	17:9	N	"	"		15:31	N	"	-
	17:10	H	נפש	"		19:13	N	"	ישראל
	17:14	N	אכל	-		19:20	N	"	קהל
	18:29	N	נפשות	עם					

It may be seen from this table that there is a tendency for this phrase to occur at least twice in a given unit: Exodus 12 (=2x); 30 (=2x); Leviticus 7 (=4x); 17 (=4x); 20 (=5x); Numbers 15 (=2x); 19 (=2x). Like the first two phrases discussed above, there is evidence of this phrase in both parts of Leviticus, as well as in Exodus and Numbers. There is, however, a much stronger case to be made

here for connecting the use of this phrase back to its usage in chapter 7 rather than ahead to chapter 20. The content of the proscriptions are very similar, especially 7:25,27 (proscription against eating blood). That the phrase occurs in the *hiphil* at 17:10 could indicate an affinity with the later chapter, where ׀׀ appears in the *hiphil* three times (which, with 17:10, are the only four occurrences of this variant), but the position taken here is that content, rather than verb form, ought to be the deciding factor. Again, two conclusions may be drawn: (1) the occurrence of this phrase, usually in the *niphal* form, throughout the three middle books of the Pentateuch provides further support for the unity of the books; and (2) the similarity of content associated with this phrase in chapters 7 and 17 suggests connecting the latter chapter with Leviticus 1-16; however, an affinity between chapters 17 and 20 (based on their common use of the *hiphil*) indicates that chapter 17 cannot be completely severed from Leviticus 18-27.

5.׀. The main concern of chapter 17 is the proper disposition of blood, and the reason why care must be taken. In attempting to determine the position of this chapter in the Book of Leviticus, affinity of content should not be ignored in favor of the exclusive comparison of style/structure. The question to be asked here is whether a chapter discussing the proper handling of blood better fits

in the overall scheme of Leviticus 1-16 or 18-27.

The word $\square\eta$ occurs in various forms 88 times in the Book of Leviticus. It is used 32 times in chapters 1-7; 13 times in 8-10; 12 times in 11-15; and 9 times in chapter 16. In the whole of chapters 18-27 it appears only 9 times: 7 in chapter 20 (six of these are in the phrase $\square\eta \square\eta\eta/\eta\eta/\eta\eta$) and twice in chapter 19 (one of which uses [v. 26] is a repetition of the proscription against eating blood). The word is used 13 times in chapter 17. In terms of usage, in the second part of Leviticus $\square\eta$ is used primarily in the formula of chapter 20. It also occurs idiomatically once in both chapters 19 and 20. The use in 19:26 repeats the proscription of 17:10-14, which was first expressed in 3:17 and 7:22-27. The affinity of content, then, indicates that chapter 17 is best understood in light of its preceding material, and especially that of its immediate predecessor, chapter 16. ($\square\eta$ is used 22 times between these two chapters, which accounts for 25 percent of its occurrences in the book.)⁷⁵ The use of $\square\eta$ in 19:26 would then be understood on the basis of similar proscriptions in

⁷⁵Cotton ("Rhetorical and Thematic Structures," p. 22) proposes the existence of a chiastic structure linking the two chapters based upon the last two occurrences of $\square\eta$ in ch. 16 and the first three in ch.17:

A (16:19) "sprinkle of the blood"

B (16:27) "blood . . . to make atonement"

B' (17:4) "blood shall be imputed . . .

he has shed blood" (opposite of B)

A' (17:6) "sprinkle of the blood"

וְהָיָה and וְאֵלֶיךָ (and their variants) throughout the Books of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers, an essential unity of these books is strongly implied. The variations that occur within these formulae, and their use in non-structural contexts, indicate that this is likely to be an organic unity rather than one imposed by a later redactor. The use of the punishment formula, וְהָיָה . . . וְהָיָה in all three books may be cited as further evidence.

2. The use of these same phrases throughout the Book of Leviticus calls into question the existence of a distinct "Holiness Code" comprising chapters 17/18-26, and makes it difficult to determine whether chapter 17 rightly belongs with this large group of material.

3. The use of וְאֵלֶיךָ וְאֵלֶיךָ, while more typical of the casuistic formulae of the later chapters of Leviticus, is used in neither section so frequently as to render the case for linking chapter 17 with chapters 18-26 beyond question. That the phrase is used more in Leviticus 17 than anywhere else further clouds the issue. All that may be said is that this is the standard casuistic formulations for chapter 17.

4. The use of the וְהָיָה formula in chapter 17 indicates ties with both sections of Leviticus. But where the tie with chapter 20 is formal (based on the verb being used in the *hiphil* in both chapters), the content of chapter 17 shows a greater affinity for chapter 7.

5. The words וְהָיָה and וְהָיָה are more typical of the first

sixteen chapters of Leviticus, and indicate that chapter 17 is best understood in connection with them.

It is therefore the conclusion of this study that, while Leviticus 17 cannot be fully divorced from its following context, it is best to regard it as part of the first section of the book, and as having an especially strong relationship to chapter 16. Wenham's suggestion that this chapter serves as a hinge between the two sections is perhaps the best way of accounting for all the data.⁷⁹

The importance of knowing how Leviticus 17 fits into the superstructure of the book is that the explanation and understanding of its contents are dependent upon its position in the corpus. When chapter 17 is grouped with the material which follows it, the so-called "Holiness Code," the focus is on sanctification, that is, what one must do to lead a holy life. This is seen in Harrison's summary of the point of the legislation in chapter 17: "If kept, the injunctions will ensure the continuity of Israel's distinct way of life."⁸⁰ When interpreted in this way, the central theme of the chapter may be described as "Holiness in Eating,"⁸¹ and that the main concern is respect for all

⁷⁹*Leviticus*, p. 241.

⁸⁰*Leviticus*, p. 178.

⁸¹So S. H. Kellogg, *The Book of Leviticus*. The Expositor's Bible. (New York: A. C. Armstrong, 1891), pp. 367-378.

life.⁸² When it is linked to the preceding chapters, however, the focus is upon the proper disposition of the blood which is the means provided by Yahweh for the attaining of forgiveness. While certainly not separated from the concern for holiness in living, the greater concern (especially in vv. 10-12) is for what Yahweh does for His people.

3.3.2. The Structure of Leviticus 17

If the position of chapter 17 in the superstructure of Leviticus influences the interpretation of given elements therein, then the position of Lev. 17:10-12 within the structure of its chapter is of even greater importance. While there is no doubt that Lev. 17:1-16 is a distinct unit (being marked out by the use of the standard introductory formulae in both 17:1-2 and 18:1-2), there has been some disagreement as to how the casuistic regulations within the chapter are to be organized.

It is generally accepted that Leviticus 17 sets forth four regulations, all having as their concern the proper disposition of blood. Harrison⁸³ and Wenham⁸⁴ suggest a

⁸²Donald E. Gowan, *Reclaiming the Old Testament for the Christian Pulpit*. (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1979), pp. 95-99.

⁸³*Leviticus*, pp. 178-179.

⁸⁴*Leviticus*, p. 240.

basic outline of five points:

- vv. 1-2: Introductory formula
- vv. 3-7: Prohibition against killing animals not offered to Yahweh
- vv. 8-9: Prohibition against sacrificing outside tabernacle
- vv.10-12: Rationale for proscribing ingestion of blood
- vv.13-16: Regulations for disposing the blood of game

Each of the regulations is indicated by the use of וְיָאָה וְיָאָה.

The same basic outline is followed by Rodriguez,⁸⁵ Noordtzij,⁸⁶ and Milgrom⁸⁷ with a single modification: verses 15-16 are seen as an independent ordinance which has become appended to the four initial laws. The outline is further modified by Noth, who groups verses 10-14 together and treats 15-16 separately.⁸⁸ This is similar to the outline of August Dillmann who seems to have read verses 13-14 as belonging with both the preceding and the following verses⁸⁹:

- vv. 3-7: slaughtering of animals only at tabernacle
- vv. 8-9: burnt and slaughtered offerings only for Yahweh at his tabernacle
- vv.10-14: blood not to be eaten: stands for atonement
- vv.13-16: blood of game and carrion not to be eaten.

⁸⁵*Substitution*, pp. 233-234.

⁸⁶*Leviticus*, p. 174.

⁸⁷"Prolegomenon," p. 99.

⁸⁸*Das dritte Buch Mose*, p. 113.

⁸⁹*Die Bucher Exodus und Leviticus* (Leipzig: Verlag von S. Hirzel, 1880), p. 535.

However, he later divides his discussion of these verses between verses 12 and 13.

Yet another modification is offered by Brichto⁹⁰ who divides the text into two main units, verses 3-7 and 8-16. He takes the chief concern of the first unit to be the cultic function of the Aaronides. Verses 8-16 he then divides into three sections, each expanding or elucidating verses 3-7. These sections, and the basic issue each addresses, are:

- vv. 8-12: eating the blood⁹¹
- vv.13-14: game
- vv.15-16: carcasses

There is a tendency among all of the above scholars to ignore those structural markers which do not conform with the way they believe the text should fit together. Harrison, Wenham, Rodriguez, Noordtzij, and Milgrom all follow the basic pattern suggested by the use of the juridical formula $\Psi\text{א} \Psi\text{א}$. However, they overlook the variant of the major structural marker ($\text{וְאֵלֶּהֶם הָאֲמֹר}$) at the beginning of verse 8, which would seem to indicate a minor break between verses 7 and 8. Harrison, Wenham and Noordtzij treat the four (or five) regulations as being distinct but related ordinances. Rodriguez divides the four

⁹⁰"On Slaughter," pp. 24-25.

⁹¹Brichto claims that this proscription only refers to the בָּנֵי , since the meat of the עֵלֶה is not eaten. He does this in spite of the connection (which he calls a merism) in v. 8 between the עֵלֶה and the בָּנֵי .

into two types/groups: the first dealing with the tabernacle as the place of slaughter (vv. 3-7, 8-9); the second prohibiting blood consumption (vv. 10-12, 13-14 + appendix). Milgrom (like Brichto) sees the latter regulations as appended to or commentary on the basic stipulation in verses 3-4: the correct offering of the $\square\text{ }^{\text{y}}\text{ }^{\text{m}}\text{ }^{\text{v}}\text{ }^{\text{v}}$.⁹² On the other hand, Brichto observes the minor break between verses 7 and 8, but overlooks the casuistic formula at verse 10, and its absence at verse 15.

Cotton has provided the most thorough outline, observing all "formal indicators of structure" for chapter 17.⁹³ He divides the text into two main sections, the minor break being at verses 7 and 8. He then divides the whole into five subsections.

- A. (v.2) Speak to . . . (impv.) and say (waw-perf.)
 - 1. (v.3) Whatsoever man . . .
- B. (v.8) And you will say . . . (impf.)
 - 1. (v.8) Whatsoever man . . .
 - 2. (v.10) And whatsoever man . . .
 - 3. (v.13) And whatsoever man . . .
 - 4. (v.15) And every soul . . .⁹⁴

Such an outline, which reflects the grammar of the text, has several implications for exegesis. First, it

⁹²Cf. Noth, *Das dritte Buch Mose*, p. 113.

⁹³"Rhetorical and Thematic Structures," p. 20. Cf. Baker, "Division Markers," pp. 14-15, who does a similar study of Leviticus 1-7.

⁹⁴This chart is a modified form of the one provided by Cotton, p. 20.

makes unlikely the contention of Noth, Brichto and Milgrom that 17:8-16 is an explanatory appendix to the basic regulation given in verses 3-4. While not indicating a separate unit, the modified structural marker in verse 8 (imperfect replaces imperative) does serve to designate what follows as being somewhat distinct from what was just said.⁹⁵ Second, it means that verses 8-9 rightly belong with the following verses (*contra* Rodriguez), especially with verses 10-12, rather than with verses 3-7, even though the latter seem to be closer in content. This further indicates that verses 10-12 are the central verses (structurally and, as will be shown below, theologically) of the second part of Leviticus 17. If verses 15-16 are then taken as an appendix, not to the whole chapter, but to verses 13-14, verses 10-12 stand as a general ordinance or principle positioned between two specific spheres in which the principle is to be applied.

vv.8-9:	specific instance - cultic sacrifice
vv.10-12:	General principle - blood not to be eaten; given for atonement
vv.13-14:	specific instance - wild game
vv. 15-16:	appendix - carrion

As will be demonstrated below, this understanding of 17:10-12 as a general ordinance governing both cultic and non-cultic life is also implicit in the text of the verses themselves.

⁹⁵This causes major problems for Milgrom's contention that v. 11 deals only with the ק'חלל.

The outline of the chapter which is indicated by the structural markers is somewhat different from that which the one would arrive at by linking paragraphs according to similarity of content. A comparison of these outlines indicates the essential unity of the chapter which is established by the overlapping of B.1 and A.2.

<u>vv.</u>	<u>Structure</u>	<u>Content</u>
3-7	A.1 "Speak to..."	A.1 slaughter at tabernacle
8-9	B.1 "You will say..."	2 sacrifice at tabernacle
10-12	2 "And anyone..."	B.1 no eating blood
13-14	3 "And anyone..."	2 no eating blood of game
15-16	3' "And anyone..."	2' carrion

Verses 8-9 serve as a hinge, linking verses 10-12 with verses 3-7. This will be developed further below, §3.4, "Flow of Thought."

Leviticus 17 begins with the standard introductory formulae marking a major division in the text (vv. 1-2). The ordinances are divided into two subdivisions by a variant of the second introductory formula in verse 8. There are in all two groups totalling four ordinances (taking vv. 15-16 as an appendix to vv. 13-14): one comprising the whole of the first unit (vv. 3-7); and three in the second unit (vv. 8-16). Verses 10-12 form the central thought for the second section, stating in verse 11 the general principle (the life-blood relationship) which governs both cultic (vv. 8-9) and non-cultic (vv. 13-16) slaughtering.

3.3.3. Paragraph Structure in Leviticus 17

According to Wenham, each paragraph of chapter 17 has

a similar structure: (1) an opening statement with וְאֵלֶּיךָ וְאֵלֶּיךָ; (2) a definition of the proscribed sin; (3) punishment (נִקְּוָה) for disobedience; and (4) additional reason(s) for obedience.⁹⁶ The following chart shows this recurring structure. (The numbering of the sections corresponds to the outline provided above, p. 87.)

<u>Section</u>	<u>Theme</u>	(1)Opening <u>Formula</u>	(2)Definition <u>of Sin</u>	(3) <u>Punishment</u>	(4)Further <u>Reasons</u>
A.1.	Slaughter at Tabernacle	v.3	vv.3-4	v.4	vv.5-7
B.1.	Sacrifice at Tabernacle	v.8	vv.8-9	v.9	--
2.	No blood to be eaten	v.10	v.10	v.10	vv.11-12
3.	Blood of Game	v.13	vv.13-14	v.14	v.14

Cotton modifies Wenham's theory, finding in chapter 17 a double cycle in a spiral chain of thought.⁹⁷ He finds five points in each spiral (which he claims can be traced throughout H): (1) action proscribed or commanded; (2) Penalty; (3) explanation or purpose; (4) further prohibition or instruction; (5) repetition or summary of main point. The last may involve a conclusion and/or a transition to a new cycle. Cotton structured the chapter thus:

	<u>Cycle I</u>	<u>Cycle II</u>	<u>(Cycle III)</u>
1. Proscription	vv.3-4	v. 10	v. 15
2. Penalty	4	10	15-16
3. Explanation	5-7	11-12	
4. Further Proscription	7	13	
5. Summary	7 (conclusion) 8-9 (transition)	14	

The disadvantage of this structure is that it does not

⁹⁶Leviticus, p. 240.

⁹⁷"Rhetorical and Thematic Structures," pp. 42-43.

adequately recognize those same structural markers Cotton points out elsewhere. (But see the comparison of structural and content outlines, p. 89 above.) According to this cyclical view, vv. 10-12 would encompass the first three parts of a cycle; and thus it does not really posit a full thought, as one would expect in a distinct structural unit. Wenham's structure for paragraphs does a better job of observing structural markers and of treating the text between them as units of thought. In his structure, however, vv. 8-9 are anomalous in lacking a fourth point, and verses 15-16 have no place in the scheme.

Of the two proposals, Wenham's is superior in that it follows more closely the structural markers in the text. (Cotton's handles more data, but in a less satisfactory manner.) In applying the proposals to verses 10-12, however, the differences appear moot, since Cotton's first three steps (which are covered in vv. 10-12) correspond exactly with parts 2, 3, and 4 of Wenham's proposal. The only difference between the two is whether the juridical formula receives its own step. The text, written out to reflect these theories, would appear thus:

<u>W</u>	<u>C</u>	
1	-	¹⁰ Anyone of the house of Israel or of the aliens sojourning in your midst
2	1	who consumes any blood
3	2	I will set my face against the life of the one consuming the blood and I will cause it to be cut off from among its people.
4	3	¹¹ For the life of the flesh is the blood, and I myself have given it for you upon the altar to atone for your lives: because the blood is for the life, it atones. ¹² Therefore, I said to the sons of Israel, "Every one of you will not consume blood, and the alien sojourning in your midst will not consume blood."

This layout shows the inadequacy of these proposals for examining units of text in depth: while they provide useful schemata for looking at the general structure of a chapter, much of the thought of the text is left unstructured, lumped under the heading, "Further Explanation."⁹⁸ While the paragraphs themselves are clearly marked in the text, the structures within the paragraphs are perhaps best handled individually.

3.4 Flow of Thought

While the attempts of Wenham and Cotton to provide a structure for the sections of Leviticus 17 are inadequate for such a purpose, they nevertheless help the reader to see the flow of thought within the chapter.

In the first paragraph (vv. 3-7), the concern is with the on-going practice among the Israelites of offering sacrifices to deities other than Yahweh. The general

⁹⁸In actuality, the text under consideration has a fairly clear surface structure. See below, §4.1, "Structure."

proscription against slaughtering away from the tabernacle has as its purpose the cessation of these pagan rites. Verses 3 and 4 provide the proscription and the punishment for its violation; v. 5 then gives the underlying motivation for the law. Verses 6 and 7 contrast the two kinds of sacrifice: the sacrifice to Yahweh, in which the blood is splashed (קָרַח) upon the altar (which points ahead to v. 11); and the sacrifice to the אֱלֹהִים, which is categorized as "whoring" (זָנָה).⁹⁹

The second paragraph (vv. 8-9) is marked as the beginning of a new section by the structural marker in verse 8.¹⁰⁰ In content, however, there is strong affinity with verses 3-7. Here the concern is not with the slaughtering of animals generally but with the offering of sacrifices *per se*. The legislation, and the penalty for its violation, is for the גֵּר as well as the native Israelite. All sacrifices are to be offered to Yahweh at His chosen place.¹⁰¹ One

⁹⁹Rendtorff's contention that this paragraph shows the conversion of the pagan אֱלֹהִים into the orthodox אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה (Studien zur Geschichte des Opfers im Alten Israel [Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1967], p. 24) is acceptable as long as one does not assume some kind of evolutionary history underlying the text. What makes a sacrifice pagan or orthodox is not the name given it, but the one to whom it is offered.

¹⁰⁰Also, the use of the phrase וְעַתָּה in v. 7 indicates a conclusion to what has preceded it.

¹⁰¹While some see in this evidence of cultic centralization (cf. Elliger), the concern is not so much with the "where" of the sacrifice as the "to whom." Cf.

can see the movement of thought between these paragraphs: from the slaughter of animals being limited to the tabernacle in order to avoid pagan practices to the offering of orthodox sacrifices only where Yahweh has made himself known (cf. Exod. 20:24). Unlike the other paragraphs, there is no expansion upon this prohibition.

The third paragraph (vv. 10-12) forbids the ingestion of any blood by anyone (either Israelite or alien). The reasons given are that blood is identified with life, and that blood is what God has given upon the altar as the means for atonement. It is not specified in verse 10 that the blood referred to is from a sacrificial animal, but this is the implication when verse 11 is taken into account. Verse 12 repeats the proscription against eating blood. This paragraph is connected with the preceding one formally by the inclusion of the ׀ in the prohibition. The two are also connected by concern for the proper handling of sacrifices, but this becomes apparent only upon a closer examination of verses 10-12 (see below).

Just as verses 3-7 and 8-9 share an affinity of content, so do verses 10-12 and 13-14. Like the third paragraph, the fourth forbids the eating of blood, though here the concern is with the blood of wild game. Only the blood-life identification is given here as a reason for the

George Knight, *Leviticus*. Daily Study Bible, Old Testament. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981), p. 102.

proscription; the blood is to be poured out upon the ground and covered up. Since these are not sacrificial animals, there can be no expiatory use of the blood thereof.¹⁰² The appended paragraph (vv. 15-16) allows for the eating of carrion (which by definition would mean ingesting blood), provided steps are taken following such an eating to restore cultic purity.

The flow of thought of this chapter, then, is as follows. Animals are to be slaughtered for food by the Israelites only at the tabernacle, so as to prevent the pagan practice of sacrificing these animals to false gods. In the same way, all sacrifices, whether by Israelite or resident alien, are to be offered to Yahweh alone. Since Yahweh has given the blood of these sacrifices as a means of atonement, and because there is a close relationship between blood and life, blood is not to be eaten. This applies also to the blood of wild game, which is to be poured out onto the earth. When one eats game which was already killed, and thus retains its blood, one is ritually unclean only until sundown, unless one fails to observe the proper procedures for cleansing oneself.

¹⁰²This counters the views of Milgrom and Brichto, which propose that the blood of a slain animal serves as a ransom/composition for the life of the animal. But vv. 13-14 never mention a notion of [נָפֵשׁ].

Chapter IV

Leviticus 17:10-12

Having studied the structure and content of Leviticus 17, in this chapter Lev. 17:10-12 will be examined in order to demonstrate the central position which these verses occupy structurally and theologically. The structure of the paragraph will be considered first, followed by a detailed analysis of verse 11 and a discussion of its meaning. The chapter will conclude with a brief look at the way Lev. 17:11 functions within its various contexts.

An initial comment about the way verse 11 is divided. Many commentators divide the verse into two cola, the division being marked in the MT by an *'athnah* under ׀פִּשְׁתִּי׀]. In this thesis, the verse is divided into 3 cola on the basis of syntactical relationships. Thus, colon 11b in Milgrom corresponds to 11c here; colon 11b in this work is 11aβ in Milgrom.

4.1 Structure

The proposals for paragraph structure suggested by Gordon Wenham and Roger Cotton have already been discussed (see above, §3.3.3, "Paragraph Structure in Leviticus 17"). While they may help to determine the general flow of

thought, the specific emphases within the paragraphs are lost in these analyses. In this section, therefore, verses 10-12 will be examined according to basic syntactical units.

10 וַאִישׁ אִישׁ מִכִּית יִשְׂרָאֵל וּמִן-הַגֵּר כְּחוֹכֶם אֲשֶׁר יֹאכַל כָּל-רֶם
 וְנִחַחְתִּי פָנָי בְּנֶפֶשׁ הָאֹכֶלֶת אֶת-הָרֶם
 וְהִכֹּרְתִי אֹתָהּ מִקֶּרֶב עַמָּהּ
 11 כִּי נֶפֶשׁ הַבָּשָׂר כָּרֶם הוּא
 וְאֲנִי נִתְתִּיךָ לָכֶם עַל-הַמְזִכָּה לְכַפֵּר עַל-נַפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם
 כִּי-הָרֶם הוּא בְּנֶפֶשׁ יִכְפֹּר
 12 עַל-כֵּן אִמְרָתִי לְבָנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כָּל-נֶפֶשׁ מִכֶּם לֹא-חָאכַל רֶם
 וְהַגֵּר הַגֵּר כְּחוֹכֶם לֹא-יֹאכַל רֶם

Verse 10 consists of three clauses, the first stating the premise using an imperfect/prefixing verb form, the latter two giving the consequences of the premise using *waw*-perfect verbs. Verse 11 is also composed of three clauses: two כי clauses forming an inclusion around a *waw* clause with an emphatic perfect. Verse 12 is a single unit composed of an על-כן followed by a two part quote which reiterates what was said in the first clause of verse 10. The diagram of this structure follows.

v.10a וַאִישׁ אִישׁ + impf.
 v.10b וְ-perf.¹
 v.10c וְ-perf.²
 v.11a הוּא . . . כִּי
 v.11b וְאֲנִי + perf.
 v.11c הוּא . . . כִּי + impf.
 v.12 עַל-כֵּן + perf.

It is one thing to note the structure of the text as it is indicated by these particles and verb forms; it is another to determine the semantic relationships which are thus indicated. This is especially difficult in the case of verse 11, in which the relationship(s) indicated by the two כי clauses and the ו -clause are less than clear.

Anneli Aejmelaeus has demonstrated the importance of determining whether a given ׀ clause precedes or follows the main clause which it modifies.¹ In the case of the first clause (כי נפש הנשר נרם הוא), it is possible to take it as modifying the second clause (. . . ואני נחתיו לכם), thereby providing the rationale for Yahweh designating blood as the means of atonement. However, this would make all of verse 11 a parenthetical discourse interrupting the flow of thought. As has already been observed, the flow of thought within the paragraphs of Leviticus 17 follows the general pattern prohibition ==> penalty ==> reason. It is therefore probable that verse 11a provides the rationale for the prohibition and penalty given in verse 10: "Anyone who consumes blood, against his life will I set my face and cut it off from its people, because the life of the flesh is the blood."² Further support for this conclusion is found in the parallel proscriptions against eating blood. Genesis 9:4, Deut. 12:23, and Lev. 17:14 all give the life-blood relationship as the reason for the prohibition.

¹Aejmelaeus, "Function and Interpretation of ׀ in Biblical Hebrew," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 105 (1986), pp. 193-209; cf. p. 196. She notes in the article that Biblical Hebrew does not *formally* distinguish between the various uses of ׀--i.e., temporal, causal, conditional. She groups these three uses together as "circumstantial" uses; context then determines the most probable aspect of each usage.

²Aejmelaeus, following Claassen, refers to this as the evidential causal function of ׀ ("Function and Interpretation of ׀," p. 203).

The next issue concerns the relationship between verse 11b (וְאֵיךְ נִחַתְיוּ לָכֵן עַל-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ לִכְפֹּר עַל-נִפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם) and what precedes it. Wenham takes it to be a second reason for the prohibition against eating blood³; others, while not commenting on how verse 11b relates to the rest of the text, seem to follow this assumption.⁴ This relationship is shown by the following:

- v.10: Prohibition against eating blood
- v.11a: Reason #1 - Life-blood relationship
- v.11b: Reason #2 - Blood given for atonement

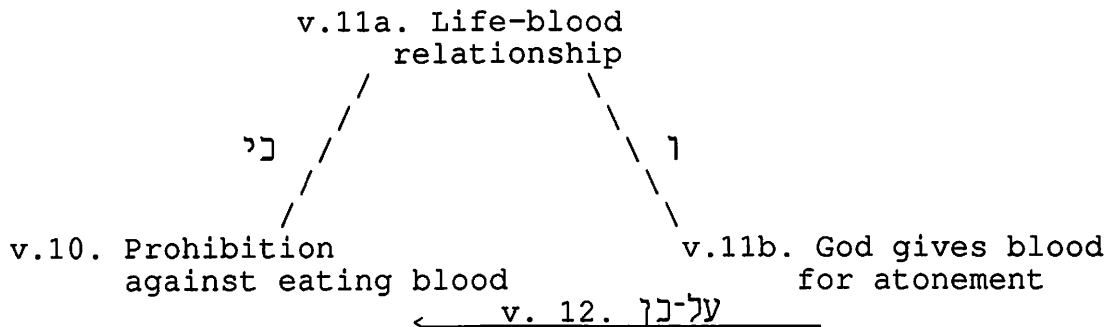
But does it make sense to prohibit the eating of any and all blood (כָּל-דָּם, v. 10) on the grounds that God has given the blood of certain specific sacrificial animals for atonement? Does a specific positive use of some blood lead causally to the prohibition against eating all blood? (In fact, v. 12 will make it clear that a causal relationship does exist; however, this does not appear to be the primary sense of v. 11b.)

An alternative understanding is posited by Bernd Janowski, who proposes that the life-blood relationship introduced in verse 11a as the first reason (*religions-*

³*The Book of Leviticus* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979), p. 245.

⁴So Rodriguez, *Substitution in the Hebrew Cultus* (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1979), pp. 238-244; Jacob Milgrom, "A Prolegomenon to Leviticus 17:11," *Studies in Cultic Theology and Terminology* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1983), p. 97; Stanislas Lyonnet, *Sin, Redemption and Sacrifice* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1970), pp. 175-176.

geschichtliche-ontologische Begründung) for the prohibition in verse 10 serves as the basis for the comment on the positive use of blood on verse 11b (*Sühneblut als Gabe Gottes*); this in turn leads to a reformulation in verse 11c into the second reason (*sühnetheologische Begründung*) for the prohibition.⁵ The relationship between cola b and c of verse 11 will be examined below. But the relationship which Janowski proposes between cola a and b serves as an interesting alternative to the commonly assumed one. Rather than two clauses each supplying a reason for the preceding prohibition, verse 11b becomes an extrapolation from verse 11a, and serves to place the limited positive use of blood (God-given atonement) in opposition to the general forbidden use in verse 10.



Verse 11a thus serves as a hinge linking the prohibition against consuming blood and the positive use of blood for atonement. Verse 12 then relates the positive use back to the prohibition.

⁵Janowski, *Sühne als Heilsgeschehen: Studien zur Sühnetheologie der Priesterschrift und zur Wurzel KPR im Alten Orient und im Alten Testament* (Neukirchener Verlag, 1982), pp. 245-247.

There are no syntactical structures which make it impossible to read verse 11ab as a two-fold reason for the proscription. But the alternative reading is preferred here for three reasons. (1) It avoids the difficulty of making a limited positive use of some blood the basis for a general prohibition against the eating of all blood. (2) It provides a reason other than repetition for the inclusion of verse 12. (3) It gives a flow of thought to the whole of verse 11 which culminates in the third clause.

This final clause of verse 11 is almost unanimously accepted by the commentators as modifying the preceding clause. Regardless of how they understand the \beth , they follow the general translation, "for the blood atones as/for/through the life." This is possible. But two syntactical features suggest an alternative. The first is the terminal position of the finite verb כִּפֶּה , "it atones." The second is the use of the כִּי in the first part of the clause (a feature usually ignored in translation). These features could be present for the sake of emphasis. The כִּי focuses attention on the blood (דָּם becomes a *casus pedens*); the terminal position of the verb focuses attention on the first part of the clause, that is, blood and its relationship (whether essential or substitutionary) to life. However, the life-blood relationship has already been emphasized in verse 11a, and verse 11b focuses attention away from the blood itself and upon Yahweh as the giver of blood.

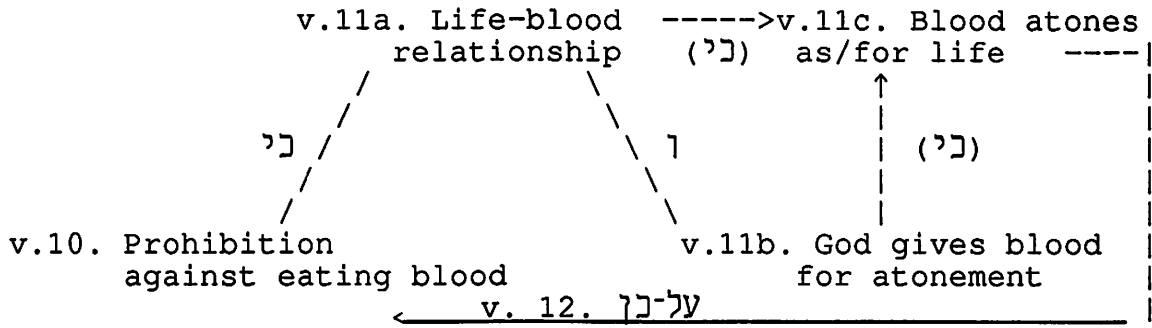
The alternative is to understand the verb ׀׀׀ as the main (independent) clause with a preceding ׀ clause modifying it. While the initial position is not the normal syntax of a ׀ clause, Aejmelaeus cites the following instances of its occurrence: Gen. 3:14; 3:17; 29:33; Num. 9:13; 18:24; 19:13; Isa. 28:15; Ezek. 11:16; Hos. 8:11.⁶ Verse 11c is, according to this reading, a distinct sentence which brings together thoughts from the first two cola and states the relationship between them explicitly. The advantage of this alternative reading is that it attempts to treat the syntactical anomalies as significant. A similar sense is nevertheless obtained with the traditional reading.

Janowski, as noted above, understands verse 11c to be the second reason for the proscription in verse 10.⁷ This is unlikely because of the distance between the ׀ of verse 11c and the prohibition in verse 10; also because of the intervention of verse 11b between the two ׀ clauses.

Adding verse 11c to the diagram above produces the following:

⁶Aejmelaeus, "Function of ׀," pp. 197-198.

⁷*Sühne als Heilsgeschehen*, p. 245.



The thought of this paragraph may also be expressed as a chiasmus:

- A. Prohibition (and penalty) [v. 10]
- B. Life-blood relationship [v. 11a]
- C. God gives blood for atonement [v. 11b]
- B'. Life-blood relationship [v. 11c]
- A'. Prohibition [v. 12]

The implications of this analysis for the exegesis of this text are significant. Verse 11c has usually been regarded as simply repeating either verse 11a or 11b.⁸ So in the commentaries one commonly sees verse 11 discussed under two points: the life/blood relationship; and the blood/altar relationship.⁹ It is the contention of this thesis that verse 11 must be studied under three points: the life/blood relationship; the blood/altar (or, preferably, Yahweh/ blood/altar) relationship; and the relationship

⁸Cf. Rodriguez, *Substitution*, pp. 244-245; Milgrom, "Prolegomenon," p. 98.

⁹A. Noordtzij (*Leviticus. Bible Student's Commentary* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982], pp. 177-178) calls attention to the relationship between v. 10 and v. 11ab. Wenham (*Leviticus*, pp. 244-245) takes v. 11c as modifying 11b.

between these two relationships.¹⁰ The analysis also suggests that there is a double focus in verse 11 (and by extension in vv. 10-12). Verse 11c is one point of focus (the life-blood relationship) as it brings together the thoughts of the previous two cola, showing the connection between the life-blood relationship and atonement. This focus is seen in the syntactical diagram. But verse 11b, with its emphasis on Yahweh as the giver of atonement blood, is also a focal point, which affects the content of what follows. This is shown by the chiasmic structure. The differences between A and A' (prohibition with penalty and prohibition on account of the positive use of blood) and B and B' (life-blood relationship in general and life-blood relationship in the sphere of atonement) are the result of verse 11b introducing the element of blood as the God-given means of atonement.

4.2 Analysis of Verse 11

Verse 11 is the focus of Lev. 17:10-12, just as 17:10-12 is the focus of Leviticus 17. The following analysis will examine each of the three cola of the verse separately, and then look at the result of all three being brought together. The structural observations made above will be followed.

¹⁰Cf. Rodriguez, *Substitution*, pp. 244-253, who discusses the verse in three parts, but takes the ׀ of v. 11c as a causal usage following the main clause (v. 11b) which it modifies.

4.2.1. Lev. 17:11a -- כי נפש הנשר כרם הוא

The relationship that exists between life (נפש) and blood is the reason given for the prohibition against eating blood.¹¹ The question of how that relationship is to be defined rests upon which function of the ׀ is operative: is it a *beth* of location or a *beth* of essence? (See above, §3.2, "Translation Notes," on this verse.) Each translation has its supporters.¹² It is helpful in this situation to see how this relationship is discussed in related passages, specifically in Lev. 17:14, Deut. 12:23, and Gen. 9:4.¹³

Lev. 17:14. כי-נפש כל-נשר רמו כנפשו הוא

. . . כי נפש כל-נשר רמו הוא

The blood-life relationship is referred to three times in this one verse. The first time the relationship is

¹¹Rodriguez, *Substitution*, pp. 240-241, rejects Milgrom's claim that since the verb used in v. 10 is אכל the idea of eating (not drinking) is inherent, which, according to Milgrom, necessitates interpreting the verse as applying only to the שלמים. While Rodriguez is correct in rejecting Milgrom's conclusion (as §3.3.2, "Structure of Leviticus 17," demonstrated, and as will be seen below), Milgrom's argument that the text refers to eating flesh with blood in it, rather than ingesting (= drinking) blood generally is supported both by context and by the parallel texts.

¹²Those favoring *beth locativi* include Wenham, Elliger, Noordtziij, Levine, Brichto, Lyonnet; the minority who support the *beth essentiae* include Rodriguez and Milgrom.

¹³The problematic 1 Sam. 14:34 is omitted here; for discussion, see Brichto, "On Slaughter and Sacrifice, Blood and Atonement," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 17 (1976), pp. 19-55; cf. pp. 21-22.

defined without prepositions: נפש כל-נשר רמו --"the life of all flesh (= every creature) is its blood." The chief connector is the possessive suffix ל-, which refers back to the נשר. The second definition is כנפשו הוא. The MT takes the הוא as a masculine pronoun, which would then refer back to the blood (דם). So: "its [again, the נשר is referenced] life it is." Here, the כ functions essentially.¹⁴ The third definition takes yet another form: נפש כל-נשר רמו הוא --"the life of all flesh is its blood." (הוא is here read as a feminine pronoun, referring to נפש.) The connecting of referents is done by the use of the suffix, to which is added the personal pronoun used as copula. These definitions may be compared as follows:

נפש כל-נשר רמו	(connection made by suffix)
כנפשו הוא	(connection made by preposition כ)
נפש כל-נשר רמו הוא	(connection made by suffix and copula)

Comparing verse 11a with the various forms of verse 14, the structure of the former most closely resembles that of the third form in verse 14; but the connection is made with the preposition כ (as in the second form) instead of the pronominal suffix ל-.

¹⁴If Gerhard von Rad (*Theologie des Alten Testaments. Band I: Die Theologie der geschichtlichen Überlieferungen Israels.* [Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1957], p. 268) considered v. 11 to be tortuous, one wonders what he thought of v. 14. Numerous attempts have been made to link the first two phrases, but syntactical problems indicate that regarding them as separate clauses probably provides the best reading of the sentence.

Deut. 12:23. הָרֵם הוּא הַנֶּפֶשׁ

As in Lev. 17:11, 14, the context is that of forbidding the eating of blood, and this clause provides the reason: the identification of blood and life. The only connector in this case is the pronoun הוּא, functioning as a copula. The relationship in this instance is clearly one of identification. This is reinforced by the repetition of the proscription, וְלֹא-תֹאכַל הַנֶּפֶשׁ עִם-הַנֶּשֶׁר, "so you will not eat the life with the flesh." In the latter clause, the referent of נֶפֶשׁ can only be the blood.

Gen. 9:4. אֶךְ-נֶשֶׁר בְּנֶפֶשׁוֹ רֵמוֹ לֹא תֹאכְלוּ

Here the ׀ functions comitatively (cf. Williams §248), so, "flesh with its life," to which is added רֵמוֹ, an explanatory phrase in apposition, "(that is) its blood."¹⁵ There is thus no formal connection between ׀ and נֶפֶשׁ; but their identification is clearly indicated in the text by their being placed in apposition (cf. Williams §70), and by the pronominal suffixes, both of which refer back to נֶשֶׁר.

In each of the above verses, the relationship between blood and נֶפֶשׁ is expressed in a different way: by the use of

¹⁵Claus Westermann disagrees with the normal explanation of this verse (that it forbids eating blood) and instead seeks to explain it as forbidding the eating of animals while they are still alive. (*Genesis 1-11. A Commentary*. Translated by John J. Scullion. [Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984], pp. 464f.) Wenham rejects this view on the basis of the numerous parallels which proscribe eating blood (*Genesis 1-15, Word Biblical Commentary, Vol. 1* [Waco: Word Book Publishers, 1982], p. 193).

a pronominal suffix (Lev. 17:14a); by use of a copula (Deut. 12:23); by use of both suffix and copula (Lev. 17:14c); by use of a *beth essentiae* (Lev. 17:14b); and by apposition (Gen. 9:4). Lev. 17:11a uses yet another means of expressing this relationship; it uses a copula with the preposition ך. This preposition should be read as a *beth essentiae*, both on the basis of the parallel use in Lev. 17:14, and because this yields the same sense as in the parallel texts. In all four of the verses, the relationship is one of identity; nowhere is it stated that blood is the bearer or seat of life, that life is located in the blood.¹⁶ And it is because of this identification of blood and life that Yahweh forbids the eating of it.¹⁷

¹⁶The idea of representation is also out of place here. The comparative particle -ך, "as," is never used in these verses. There is a one-to-one identification, whereby, within this particular frame of reference (eating meat) blood *is* life. This is similar to the situation in the Lord's Supper. Jesus says that the bread *is* his body and the wine *is* his blood. And just as the blood does not cease to be blood in this frame of reference, even though it is also ׀ך, neither do the bread and wine cease to be what they are in the frame of reference of the Supper.

¹⁷If one wishes to push it further, asking why it is wrong to eat the ׀ך, one runs into a blank wall; the Scriptures do not answer this question. Any suggestion that the reason lies in the wrongness of one ׀ך eating another is speculative. Likewise the proposal that the blood (and the fat) are specifically Yahweh's (cf. Rodriguez, *Substitution*, pp. 236-238) overlooks the fact that everything belongs to Yahweh: he is creator of both flesh and ׀ך (Gen. 2; cf. Ps. 50:12-13; Matt. 10:28). Even though it may be conceded that blood and fat are reserved by Yahweh for pouring/burning upon the altar, the question of why remains unanswered--save that the burning is referred to as "an aroma of appeasement to Yahweh" (ך׀ך ׀ך׀ך ׀ך׀ך)-- Lev. 3:5),

4.2.2. Lev. 17:11b -- וְאֲנִי נָתַתִּיו לָכֶם עַל-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ לְכַפֵּר עֲלֵי-
נַפְשֵׁיכֶם.

This colon consists of four phrases: "and I myself have given it"; "to you"; "upon the altar"; "to atone for your lives." Each phrase will be considered separately (the first two will be taken together) before being understood as a unit.

וְאֲנִי נָתַתִּיו לָכֶם ("and I myself have given it to you"). The speaker (אֲנִי) is Yahweh, and the audience (לָכֶם) is composed of the people of Israel and the resident aliens (see v. 10). The object suffix (ל-) refers to the blood. Milgrom is correct when he notes that the use of the verb נָתַן here is not to be confused with its use in the specific sacrificial rubrics where the priest is the subject and the verb has the sense of "place the blood."¹⁸ However, his claim that when God is the subject of the verb נָתַן the meaning is "bestow, appoint, assign" rather than "give" is questionable.¹⁹ In none of the passages cited by Milgrom

and the blood serves to atone (Lev. 17:11b). Ultimately, the only answer is that Yahweh wanted it that way.

¹⁸"Prolegomenon," p. 97. However, Rodriguez notes that of all the words used of the disposition of sacrificial blood, נָתַן is the most general, and is therefore capable of including the others (שָׁפַךְ, יָרַק). His conclusion is that "all the possible ways in which the blood manipulation is effectuated are included" (*Substitution*, p. 241). All this is somewhat beside the point, since it is Yahweh, not the priest, who is the subject of נָתַן in this case.

¹⁹"Prolegomenon," p. 97; Rodriguez concurs with Milgrom's claim (*Substitution*, p. 242).

(Num. 8:19; 18:8,19; 35:6; Lev. 6:10; 7:34; 10:17; Gen. 1:29; 9:3) is the meaning "give" precluded. In fact they *all* deal with Yahweh giving what is his. Especially to be noted are Gen. 1:29 and 9:3. In these verses, Yahweh tells man (Adam, Noah) what may be eaten--first, only plants (Genesis 1), then animals as well (Genesis 9). The use of the word ׀ן] emphasizes that these are given by Yahweh to man, and are therefore to be received as gifts.²⁰ In other passages, which Milgrom does not cite, the meaning "give" is also paramount: Lev. 14:34 and Num. 10:29, for example, refer to God giving the land of Canaan to the Israelites; Num. 11:21 refers to Yahweh giving his people meat in the wilderness. The importance of this verb, and the idea of "give/gift," in this context is brought out by Paul Bretscher when he notes that "man can only receive it [the covenant of which the blood is the pledge] as a gift."²¹

The use of the ׀ן] further emphasizes this point. Karl Elliger (following Gesenius) notes that the use of the

²⁰From this follows the importance of the first Article of the Creed, and its consequence in the table prayer: "Lord God, Heavenly Father, bless us and these Thy gifts which we take from Thy bountiful goodness" (SC, App. I, 9; *Trig.*, p. 559).

²¹"The Covenant of Blood," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 25 (1954), pp. 1-27, 109-125, 199-209; cf. p. 8.

pronoun emphasizes the subject.²² Takamitsu Muraoka attempts to define this emphasis more exactly. This instance appears to fall into his category of emphasis of "implicit contrast."²³ Throughout the latter part of Leviticus, this form (pronoun + finite verb) is used in this manner. In Lev. 20:24 the emphasis is, as in Lev. 17:11, on God as the giver (of land [20:24]; of atonement blood [17:11]). Elsewhere, it is used to describe God's rejection of those who transgress his law (Lev. 20:3,5; 26:16,24,28, 32,41). The implicit contrast established by this use of the emphatic form is that it is Yahweh, not some other deity, who is the doer of these things. In the case of Lev. 17:11 and 20:24, the idea is that Yahweh gives the blood and the land; this precludes any attempt either to ascribe these gifts to another god or to appropriate them as one's own. Just as the land was a gift of Yahweh (and not some other god) and was given freely, not having been achieved by the Israelites' own power,²⁴ so the blood was given by Yahweh

²²*Leviticus*. Handbuch zum Alten Testament. (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck] Verlag, 1966), p. 219; GKa S135a.

²³*Emphatic Words and Structures in Biblical Hebrew* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1985), pp. 55-56. Similar usage is found in Gen. 14:23; Deut. 5:24; Judg. 14:3; 1 Sam. 17:56; 1 Kings 1:17; 2 Sam. 12:28; 1 Sam. 10:18; Is. 20:6; etc.

²⁴With the consequence that the land was to be used as a gift and not abused; cf. legislation on the sabbath years (Leviticus 25), and the consequence of neglecting these (2 Chron. 26:21).

(and not another deity, cf. 17:7) and did not belong to the Israelites to do with as they pleased.²⁵ The first phrase, then, of verse 11b establishes the relationship between Yahweh and his people: he, and no one else, is the giver of the blood; they are the recipients of the gift.

עַל-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ ("upon the altar"). The third phrase serves to unite the first two and the fourth. The first two phrases describe God's provision of the blood; the fourth describes the purpose for the gift. The prepositional phrase which comes in between locates the activity. Not all blood is expiatory.²⁶ Expiation by blood has three elements, which are spelled out in this verse: it is provided by God; it is received by man; and it happens on the altar. The importance of the altar in this activity (*Heilsgeschehen*) finds expression in Exod. 20:24.

An altar of earth you will make for me, and you will sacrifice upon it your whole-burnt-offerings and your communion offerings, your flocks and your cattle; in every place where I bring my name to remembrance I will

²⁵This is the root of the prophetic rejection of hypocritical sacrifice. When the one offering the sacrifice views it as if he were giving something to merit God's favor, the focus of the sacrifice is distorted. It is God who gives, man who receives. Luther's rejection of the Roman Mass is based upon the same distortion, and a confusion of the giver and the recipient.

²⁶Verses 13-14, while forbidding the eating of blood, does not treat the blood of game as having expiatory value. This undermines the theories of Milgrom and Brichto, since their contentions are dependent upon all blood being the ransom for the one who incurred guilt by slaughtering the beast (Milgrom) or composition for the life of the animal (Brichto).

come to you and I will bless you.

The altar is referred to as the place where "I will bring my name to remembrance."²⁷ Attached to this place where sacrifices are offered and where Yahweh's name is brought to remembrance is the promise "I will come to you and I will bless you."²⁸ The importance of the altar in Lev. 17:11b is that it is the place where God has promised to provide blessing. As J. H. Kurtz points out, the role of the altar and the role of the blood (as place and means of atonement) both rest upon the promise of Yahweh which is attached to

²⁷Brevard Childs argues that the *hiphil* of ׀׀׀ is to be understood as meaning "make known" or "proclaim." (*Memory and Tradition in Israel*. Naperville: Alec R. Allenson, 1961, pp. 11-15; cf. Childs, *The Book of Exodus*. Old Testament Library. [Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974], p. 447.) While proclamation may indeed be a part of bringing something to remembrance, in light of other passages where the causative of ׀׀׀ is used in non-proclamatory contexts (Gen. 41:9; I Kings. 17:18; Num. 5:15; cf. TDOT 4: 73-74), the translation provided is to be preferred.

²⁸W. H. Gispen perceives a different order of events from that suggested in the text. The Lord first brings to mind his revelation, then the altar is built. "[T]he recollection of the Lord's revelation comes first, then the Lord will grant the one who sacrifices the experience of His nearness and blessing." (Gispen, *Exodus*. Bible Student's Commentary. Translated by Ed van der Maas. [Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982], p. 203.) In the Exodus text, however, the altar seems to be the site of the sacrifices by which the name of Yahweh is brought to remembrance and by which the one remembered comes in blessing. 1 Kings 8 may be compared: Solomon offers his prayer *יְהוָה יִסְכַּח*; the promise here, though, is not blessing (*יִסְכַּח*) but forgiveness (*יִסְכַּח*). Cf. Christopher Mitchell, *Meaning of brk "To Bless" in the Old Testament*. SBL Dissertation Series 95. (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), p. 106.

them.²⁹ As was seen above in connection with the blood, the movement is from God to man: the blood is given by God; the altar is the place where God promises to come to his people and bless them.

לְכַפֵּר עַל-נַפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם ("to atone for your lives"). Milgrom argues that the use of this phrase must be understood in the same way as in Ex. 30:11-16 and Num. 31:48-54.³⁰ נַפְשׁ would then refer specifically to life in danger (under the wrath of God), and the whole phrase is to be understood as meaning "to expiate [pay a ransom] for your lives." Rodriguez suggests that in the present context, נַפְשׁ is used to denote "person" rather than "life," so "yourselves."³¹ That this is the case in verse 12 (לְ-נַפְשׁ מִכֶּם = "any of you") seems clear; but in general, Leviticus 17 uses נַפְשׁ to designate a person. נַפְשׁ is introduced in verse 10 as the object of God's wrath (וְנַפְשׁוֹתֵיכֶם), and is then picked up through the rest of the paragraph. נַפְשׁ, being a polysemous word, often poses such problems of denotation. In the present context, the idea of "life" seems to be dominant, with the use of נַפְשׁ for "person" in verse 12 being derivative in

²⁹*Sacrificial Worship of the Old Testament*, translated by James Martin (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980 [reprint]), p. 45.

³⁰"Prolegomenon," p. 98.

³¹*Substitution*, p. 243: "Not referring to what a person has, but . . . someone alive."

order to make the internal connection apparent. Milgrom's argument that Lev. 17:11 should be interpreted in light of the passages from Exodus and Numbers overlooks the problem of context. He has demonstrated the similarity of context for the phrase **נפֿש על נפֿר** in Exod. 30 and Num. 31.³² But the present context differs greatly from these. The issue at stake is not a census, as in Exodus and Numbers, but the disposal of blood. The means of atonement is blood, not precious metal. Only the purpose phrase is similar: **לנפֿר על-נפֿשתיכם**. That this phrase indicates a ransoming of the person/life from the wrath of God is established already by the present context even apart from reference to parallel passages: the notion of the **נפֿש** under God's judgement is already expressed in verse 10.³³ Also, the phrase **נפֿר על-** is one of the standard idioms used in Leviticus to denote the beneficiary of the sacrifice. Rodriguez further establishes the connection between Lev. 17:11 and the standard idiom by citing Num. 15:28, where **נפֿר עליך** and

³²"Prolegomenon," p. 98.

³³In this context, the specific trespass (eating blood) which brought about the judgement **נפֿשתיך** is not what is atoned by the blood, since the purpose phrase occurs in a commentary on the reason why blood should not be eaten. The purpose phrase in v. 11b and the judgement phrase in v. 10 are to be understood in contrast: the first is a result of improper use of blood; the second defines the proper use. The notion of the **נפֿש** under divine wrath is introduced in v. 10; the recovering of the **נפֿש** is brought out in v. 11. The same relationship may be seen between v. 4 (guilty of bloodshed) and v. 6 (blood splashed on altar).

כַּפֶּר עַל-נַפְשׁ are used in parallel.³⁴ Milgrom is therefore incorrect when he identifies Exodus 30, Numbers 31 and Leviticus 17 as the only occurrences of the idiom כַּפֶּר עַל-נַפְשׁ. In fact, the text cited by Rodriguez is closer in context to Lev. 17:11 than either of Milgrom's suggested parallels, since it deals with the offering of a חַטָּאת, which includes the placing of blood on the altar (cf. Leviticus 4). While Milgrom's suggested translation ("ransom your lives") is acceptable, and is supported by the context, his parallel passages are contextually more dissimilar than similar to the passage under investigation.³⁵

The phrase לְכַפֵּר עַל-נַפְשׁוֹ יָנִים gives the purpose for which Yahweh has given the blood upon the altar: to atone (or expiate or pay a ransom) for one who stands under God's wrath. The specific reason for the sinner being in the hands of an angry God is not provided--v. 11a states the reason why blood ingestion incurs God's wrath, and verse 11b provides the means for appeasing him when that particular sin is committed only secondarily (insofar as the atoning blood is given for that sin as much as for any other).

Taking all its phrases together, verse 11b is a tangential or explanatory comment on verse 11a, the

³⁴*Substitution*, p. 243.

³⁵Perhaps the reason for introducing these phrases is to place the discussion on the level of paying a price, rather than substituting a life.

connection with which verse 11c will make explicit. The statement of the life-blood relationship in verse 11a (as the reason for prohibiting the eating of blood) serves as the basis for this comment on the purpose of the sacrificial blood. It is the most explicit statement on blood as means of atonement (*Sühnemittel*) in the Old Testament. This view of blood is established by three facts which are brought together in verse 11b: (1) Yahweh himself has given the blood (2) upon the altar, the place to which his promise to come to his people and bless them is attached; (3) blessing in this case is also the purpose for which God has given the blood, namely, to atone for their lives.³⁶ Finally, this colon serves as a contrast to verse 10 (with which it is connected by verse 11a): when man does with the blood as he pleases (i.e., eats it), it incurs God's wrath; when God's gift of sacrificial blood is properly appropriated, it rescues man from God's wrath--that is, it brings forgiveness.³⁷

³⁶The parallel text to v. 11b mentioned above, Num. 15:28, places the verb נָתַן into parallelism with נָתַן , as in Leviticus 4, 5. Forgiveness is thus shown to be directly related to atonement. Forgiveness, blessing and atonement are thus demonstrably part of the same semantic field.

³⁷The understanding that blood operates to ransom a life from God's wrath is stated explicitly in Luther's explanation of the Second Article of the Creed (SC II, 4). See also 1 Peter 1:18-19.

4.2.3. Lev. 17:11c -- כי הרם הוא כנפש יכפר.

Several scholars have called attention to the chiasmic structure of verses 11a and 11c:



The question is whether this structure indicates similarity or dissimilarity of meaning. This can only be established by the syntax of the clause itself; chiasmic structures and other such phenomena are interesting, and useful for calling attention to details of the text, but do not contain meaning inherently. The meaning of a chiasmus is dependent upon how the reader understands the relationship between the chiasmically arranged signs.³⁸

The structure of this colon has already been discussed (§4.1, "Structure"). It has been proposed that it is a separate sentence composed of a causal ׀ clause preceding the one-word main clause, יכפר. In this way, the הוא is read as a copula linking הרם and כנפש.³⁹ But this

³⁸Contra J. P. Louw, who repeatedly ascribes inherent meaning to chiasmic structures (*Semantics of New Testament Greek* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press/Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982], pp. 120, 138).

³⁹The other possibility is to take the הרם as a *casus pedens*, with the הוא serving for emphasis.

structure does not establish the meaning either, although it does rule out the possibility of the ׀ being *beth instrumenti*, since the ׀ indicates a relationship between ׀ and ׀ rather than the completion of a verbal phrase (׀ ׀).

The key to understanding verse 11c is to determine the referent of ׀: is it the life of the sacrificial victim or the life of the one offering the sacrifice? The approach taken by Rodriguez, that is, to determine the use of ׀ first, then to establish the referent of ׀ works backward and is flawed. He is forced to rely on arguments of intentionality and theology to determine the function of ׀; this is to argue what the author could or could not have said based upon constraints which are imposed by the reader. (In other words, he winds up arguing from an assumed meaning to a function, rather than from function to meaning.) Rodriguez rejects the *beth essentiae* on the basis that verse 11c cannot be a summary or repetition, because of the use of ׀.⁴⁰ The *beth instrumenti* is ruled out on the grounds that it would create tension between verse 11b (blood atones because God gives it) and verse 11c (blood atones because of the life in it).⁴¹ But such a tension is more imagined

⁴⁰*Substitution*, pp. 245, 247; cf. Metzinger, "Die Substitutionstheorie und dass alttestamentliche Opfer mit besonderer Berücksichtigung von Lv 17:11," *Biblica* 21 (1940), p. 354. However, such repetition introduced by ׀ does occur in v. 14.

⁴¹*Substitution*, pp. 247-248.

than real, since the two clauses taken together indicate, first, that God is the giver of blood and, second, the rationale underlying the choice of blood as the means of atonement. Rodriguez is therefore left with *beth pretii*, which points to וְגַם as referring to the life of the one offering the sacrifice. From this he concludes that the verse is substitutionary in nature.

The same method of argumentation is employed by Stanislas Lyonnet to arrive at a different conclusion. After noting the indecision many authors have felt with regard to the referent of וְגַם, he suggests that the following considerations are definitive. (1) The phrase וְגַם must be understood in the same way as in its other occurrences in similar contexts (Gen. 9:4; Lev. 17:14). (2) The phrase cannot "be assimilated with the phrase of the preceding phrase [*sic*]" since "a different preposition is used and the word *nepeš* ... is merely a personal pronoun." (3) There is no allusion to the *lex talionis*. Lyonnet therefore concludes that the function of the וְגַם is *beth essentiae*.⁴² He follows this conclusion with the further observation that a substitutionary (*beth pretii*) view would contradict other Levitical laws, according to which blood expiates only for light, not capital, sins. His

⁴²*Sin, Redemption, and Sacrifice*, pp. 176-177.

argumentation is thus very similar to Milgrom's.⁴³

Lyonnet's considerations are not, however, as definitive as he thinks. (1) The וְחַיֵּי of verse 11c is not clear with respect to referent, unlike its parallels. There is another וְחַיֵּי present in the immediate context, that of verse 10. Understanding these two together produces a very different result: that the two uses of וְחַיֵּי in this paragraph have a common referent, the life of a person. (2) That וְחַיֵּי in verse 11b is "merely a personal pronoun" is a conclusion, not an established fact. Also, it is not infrequent to have two different prepositions be used in parallel statements; Leviticus 16 repeatedly interchanges לְךָ and לְךָ. (3) The lack of allusion to the *lex talionis* is also a conclusion; the LXX uses the phrase ἀντι τῆς ψυχῆς, which reflects the *talionis* formula.⁴⁴ Also, other instances of וְחַיֵּי having a *beth pretii* may be adduced:

⁴³See especially on the חַיֵּי: "Sin-offering or Purification-offering?" *Studies*, pp. 67-69, and "Israel's Sanctuary: The Priestly 'Picture of Dorian Gray,'" *Studies*, pp. 75-84.

⁴⁴Cf. Büchsel, "ἀντι," TDNT 1: 372-373. Ordinarily, it is true, LXX used ἀντι to translate חַיֵּי, but in Deut. 19:21 (the "lex talionis") it translates לְךָ. (In the parallels to Deut. 19:21, Exod. 21:23-24 and Lev. 24:20, the Hebrew uses חַיֵּי.) The LXX in this case understood וְחַיֵּי along the lines of the formula in Deuteronomy. Lyonnet's view is shared by Janowski, who notes that *beth pretii* cannot be the intended sense since the *lex talionis* in Lev. 24:20 uses חַיֵּי rather than לְךָ to indicate the exchange (*Sühne als Heilsgeschehen*, pp. 244-245).

Num. 17:3; 2 Sam. 14:7; 23:17; Ezek. 27:13; Jonah 1:14.⁴⁵

Methodologically, Lyonnet uses the same meaning-to-function approach as Rodriguez. But since his assumed meaning differs, his conclusion regarding the function of] and the referent of וְנִפְשָׁם also differs. Nor is his argument any more conclusive than Rodriguez's.

Brichto argues similarly. He defends the *beth pretii*, but understands the referent of וְנִפְשָׁם to be the victim. He reaches these results by dismissing out of hand the very existence of a *beth essentiae*, and by claiming that since the וְנִפְשָׁם of the one requiring expiation is already referred to, in the plural, in the phrase עַל-נַפְשֹׁתָיִם it cannot also be the referent here in the singular.⁴⁶ But human וְנִפְשָׁם is referred to in the singular in verse 10 and verse 12 (the latter of which is, admittedly, a pronoun). Brichto arrives at his reading of the text and theory of composition by taking those ideas of Levine, on the one hand, and Milgrom on the other, with which he agrees (dismissing the others) and molding them into a whole. Both he and Lyonnet attempt to explain away, rather than explain, the evidence which does not fit, such as the *beth essentiae* (Brichto) or the

⁴⁵Cf. Rodriguez, *Substitution*, p. 249.

⁴⁶"On Slaughter," p. 27.

LXX's translation (Lyonnet).⁴⁷

When no consensus can be reached regarding the reading of a given passage, it may be necessary to examine not only the passage but also the readers, asking why there is no consensus. Such an examination of Lev. 17:11c shows that there is a fundamental ambiguity about the text which affects the reading of the entire verse. It also demonstrates that the different readings are a by-product of conflicting hermeneutical views.

4.2.3.1 Ambiguity

William Empson offers the following operative definition of "ambiguity."

An ambiguity, in ordinary speech, means something very pronounced, and as a rule witty or deceitful. I propose to use the word in an extended sense, and shall think relevant to my subject any verbal nuance, however slight, which gives room for alternative reactions to the same piece of language.⁴⁸

The referent problem of Lev. 17:11c falls into the parameters set by this definition.

Ambiguity has also been discussed by Stanley Fish, who argued that different interpretations of Miltonian poetry are themselves significant, indicating an inherent

⁴⁷*Sin, Redemption and Sacrifice*, p. 179; "On Slaughter," p. 26.

⁴⁸*Seven Types of Ambiguity* (Edinburgh: New Directions, 1949), p. 1.

ambiguity.⁴⁹ However, he locates this ambiguity in the reader or the reading community rather than in the text, which he believes to be a product of the act of reading.

Closer to home, Paul Raabe has examined ambiguity in the Psalms.⁵⁰ He observes that "there are places where the word, phrase, or sentence could be translated and understood in two or more ways. In these cases, very often there is disagreement among the commentaries."⁵¹ Like Fish, Raabe finds scholarly disagreement significant, a possible indicator of ambiguity. Unlike Fish, he argues for deliberate or intentional ambiguity; that is, a reader's perception of ambiguity indicates authorial intent: because the reader perceives it, the author intended it.⁵²

Rather than locating ambiguity in either the reader's perception of the text or the author's intention in writing the text, this thesis locates ambiguity in the interaction

⁴⁹"Interpreting the *Variorum*," in Jane P. Tompkins, ed. *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), pp. 164-184.

⁵⁰Paul R. Raabe, "Deliberate Ambiguity in the Psalter," forthcoming article in *Journal of Biblical Literature*.

⁵¹"Deliberate Ambiguity," p. 1.

⁵²That this is Raabe's position is most clearly seen in his conclusion. There he makes the move from ambiguity as the reader perceives it and speaks instead of "the ways in which the Hebrew psalmists created ambiguity" ("Deliberate Ambiguity," p. 18).

between the text (and, intentionally or otherwise, the author through the text) and the reader. Fish's thoroughgoing postmodernism is rejected on the belief that there is an objective text upon which widely divergent readers are agreed: that is, they all deal with the same words in the same order and in the same syntactical relationships.⁵³ But neither is Raabe's attempt to demonstrate *deliberate* ambiguity accepted. Speakers and writers often make ambiguous statements unintentionally. Authorial intent, unless the author can be consulted, is at best hypothetical.

This thesis uses the term "textual ambiguity." This is to indicate that the text, on the level of sense (what is said rather than what it signifies), has been, and therefore can be, read in different ways. Contrary to Fish, a text is assumed. Unlike Raabe, no appeal is made to authorial intent.⁵⁴

4.2.3.2 Textual Ambiguity in Lev. 17:11c

The point of ambiguity in Lev. 17:11c is the referent of וְשָׂרֵי. The problem in determining this referent is that this is the only time in verses 10-12 that וְשָׂרֵי is

⁵³Space does not permit a philosophical discourse over reality and perception. Whether or not there is really a text, all the commentators assume there is one, and work accordingly. Even if it is only a matter of convention, that is sufficient for this present work.

⁵⁴See the citations in Raabe for further information on ambiguity.

undetermined by either a construct or a suffix.

v. 10b:	<u>כַּנְפֵשׁ הָאֲכַלְתָּ אֶת-הָרֶמָּה</u>	(cons.)
v. 11a:	<u>נֶפֶשׁ הַבְּשָׂר כָּרָם הוּא</u>	(cons.)
v. 11b:	<u>לִכְפֹּר עַל-נַפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם</u>	(suff.)
v. 12:	<u>כָּל-נֶפֶשׁ מִכֶּם</u>	(cons.)

נֶפֶשׁ is also determined in Lev. 17:14 and Gen. 9:4.

Lev. 17:14:	<u>נֶפֶשׁ כָּל-בְּשָׂר רֶמָּה</u>	(cons.)
	הוּא <u>כַּנְפֵשׁוֹ</u>	(suff.)
	<u>נֶפֶשׁ כָּל-בְּשָׂר רֶמָּה הוּא</u>	(cons.)
Gen. 9:4:	אֶךְ-בְּשָׂר <u>כַּנְפֵשׁוֹ</u> רֶמָּה	(suff.)

Finally, in Deut. 12:23, נֶפֶשׁ can only refer to the life of the animal because of the explanatory clause וְלֹא-תֹאכַל הַנֶּפֶשׁ וְלֹא-תֹאכַל הַנֶּפֶשׁ . So only here, in Lev. 17:11c, is the referent unspecified.⁵⁵ It must be determined from context.

The structure of the text is of limited help in determining the referent. The two proximal occurrences of נֶפֶשׁ refer to human life. In verse 11b, it occurs in the plural with a second person plural suffix. In verse 12 it occurs in the singular in construct with מִכֶּם. Further support for taking the referent to be human life comes from the use of the phrase נֶפֶשׁ in verse 10. But structure also serves to suggest assimilating the נֶפֶשׁ in verse 11c with the נֶפֶשׁ of the animal in verse 11a. The chiasmic structure may be read as indicating such a connection. Likewise, one can find in the pattern of the paragraph an alternating sequence between נֶפֶשׁ as human life and נֶפֶשׁ as life of the

⁵⁵This type of ambiguity is similar to Raabe's category of "Ambiguous Suffixal Antecedent" ("Deliberate Ambiguity," p. 8), except that the ambiguity here is caused by the lack of a suffix.

sacrificial animal. So:

- v.10. וַחַיִּי(וֹ) of one eating blood
- v.11a. וַחַיִּי of all creatures
- v.11b. וַחַיִּי of one sacrificing
- v.11c. וַחַיִּי of sacrificial animal
- v.12. וַחַיִּי as person not eating blood

Structurally, the evidence is inconclusive: the reader is able to find sufficient support for either position he chooses to defend.

The same is true of the flow of thought. Taking only verse 11 for the moment, the verse begins by noting that "the life of the flesh is the blood." While in verse 14 נֶשֶׁךְ refers only to flesh that is eaten, this is not necessarily the case in verse 11. Here נֶשֶׁךְ may be understood as an inclusive term for all creatures--including humans. Genesis 9 shows a similar flow of thought. There, Yahweh gives men permission to eat any living thing (יָחַד, v. 3), only they are not to eat the flesh (נֶשֶׁךְ) with the life (וַחַיִּי, v. 4), that is the blood. God then adds that he will require the life-blood of both man (אָדָם) and beast (יָחַד, v. 5), specifically in connection with murder (שִׁפְךָ רֵם הָאָדָם, v. 6). While the use of נֶשֶׁךְ denotes what is eaten, its connotation allows for the discussion of the life-blood of both man and beast. It is possible that נֶשֶׁךְ in verse 11a, while denoting only the edible flesh, carries also an implicit idea of man as נֶשֶׁךְ.

The movement from verse 11a to 11b is from "the life is the blood" to God giving the blood upon the altar to atone for "your lives." There is a kind of inclusion in

these cola, with וְנָחַם at the beginning and at the end. Blood is not to be eaten because of the special relationship that exists between blood and life. This leads to a comment on the positive aspect of that relationship: since blood and life are identified with one another, blood has been provided as the means for expiating life.

Verse 11c combines the central thoughts of the first two cola. The theme of life related to blood is expressed, as is that of atonement. The ambiguity of the phrase וְנָחַם affects the understanding of the relationship between the themes; that is, it calls into question what it is about the blood-life relationship that is significant for atonement. If the וְנָחַם of the animal is the referent, blood-as-life becomes the key element. If the וְנָחַם is that of the offerer, blood-for-life becomes central. Either way, the flow of thought makes sense.

That both readings are possible is evident from the literature, each side presenting compelling arguments. That ambiguity is intended by the author cannot be proven. That reading וְנָחַם ambiguously is helpful for understanding the verse is a position not hitherto considered.

If one reads וְנָחַם as an ambiguous construction, one is forced to take both options and hold them in tension. So וְנָחַם הָאֵלֹהִים הָאֵלֹהִים הָאֵלֹהִים indicates that blood atones because it is identified with the life of the animal. At the same time, it indicates that this blood atones because it is

given for the life of the one offering the sacrifice. Verse 11c thus takes what was said in cola a and b and, through an ambiguous construction, juxtaposes them in such a way that each contributes to the understanding of the other. As a result of colon c, colon b is clarified by virtue of its juxtaposition with the theme of blood-as-life: God gives blood to atone because blood and life are identified. At the same time, colon a is enhanced by being juxtaposed with the theme of atonement by colon c: blood-as-life finds its fullest expression when it is given for life.

4.2.3.3 Hermeneutics and Lev. 17:11c

If the text is ambiguous, how does this affect the debate over substitution? The answer is, it does not.

Lyonnet especially argues that the substitution cannot be intended, and appeals to a) the text as he reads it and b) one strain of historical readings. Against b) a second heritage of readings, led by the LXX may be placed. Against a) stands the fact that reading $\Psi\Omega\Omega$ as *beth essentiae* with the animal's $\Psi\Omega$ the referent does not preclude a substitutionary reading. Verse 11b states explicitly that the blood is given to expiate for the life of the one offering the sacrifice. Verse 11c would then give the underlying reason why this is so: since life and blood are identified, blood expiates as life, that is, a life-for-life exchange takes place.

Milgrom, who like Lyonnet argues against substitution,

never denies that such an exchange occurs. What he opposes is the *idea* of substitution, that is, that the life of the animal takes the place of the life of the offerer. He claims to have proven that such a substitutionary reading of the text is impossible⁵⁶; but one is hard put to find where this proof is presented. It becomes a matter of Milgrom's *a priori* conclusion that the animal dying instead of the offerer "can find no support in Scripture."⁵⁷ (His objection is surprising in that he repeatedly takes ָּ as meaning "ransom/substitute" in a companion article.⁵⁸) Milgrom and Lyonnet both are influenced by their hermeneutical presuppositions.

The same, however, is true of those who argue for a substitutionary reading, such as Rodriguez. Like Lyonnet and Milgrom, he claims to prove substitution based upon textual criteria. He contends that since he proves the reading of ָּ as *beth pretii* with reference to the one sacrificing this necessitates a substitutionary reading.

⁵⁶"Prolegomenon," p. 103n.34.

⁵⁷"Sacrifices and Offerings, OT", *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible. Supplementary Volume* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976), p. 764.

⁵⁸"Atonement in the OT," *IDBSup.*, p. 80. This is similar to Zohar, who denies the idea of substitution in the ָּ even though his own discussion of the verb ָּ seems to indicate that it is a primary consideration ("Repentance and Purification: The Significance and Semantics of ָּ in the Pentateuch," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 107 [1988], p. 609-618; cf. p. 611).

But this is not so. Milgrom argues for לָקַח carrying the freight of "ransom," as does Brichto. Both argue that the blood is a kind of payment. But they both deny that it is substitutionary, that life/blood substitutes for life. That the blood is given in exchange for the life of the sacrificer does not necessitate that it is given as a substitute.

Each of these positions may be considered a legitimate reading of Lev. 17:11. That is, each is able to make its appeal to the text without doing injury to the structure and syntax of the text. However, not every legitimate reading is a valid one. Validity is best determined by examining the levels of meaning of the text, and asking which reading provides the best matrix for understanding the text.⁵⁹

When the text is taken ambiguously, it enables one to see both arguments concerning the sense of the text *vis-a-vis* the function of the ל and the referent of לָקַח . It allows for a richer understanding of the text on the level of sense. But the question of substitution remains open, and is recognized as being not really a textual issue. It

⁵⁹On legitimate and valid readings, see Daniel Patte, "Discipleship According to Matthew," paper presented to the Role of the Reader Seminar in Milan, Italy, July 1990, pp. 7-8. Voelz, in an unpublished reaction to Patte, suggests that this distinction is helpful (p. 1), but asks how one is to determine validity versus legitimacy (pp. 3-4). Patte judges validity based upon an ethical judgement of a given reading; in this thesis, validity is tied into the amount of data available for matrixing within a given reading. On the place of hermeneutics in exegesis, see §1.1 "Objectivity."

is a matter of hermeneutical position, a question of proper matrixing. This issue will be dealt with in the final chapter.

4.3 Meaning in Leviticus 17:11

In a recent paper, J. W. Voelz has attempted to clarify what is meant by "meaning" in exegesis.⁶⁰ He distinguishes between four levels of meaning. The first level is that of sense, which "constitutes *what a text is saying*."⁶¹ Significance, the second level, is "the meaning of the sense . . . of a text, that is, the meaning of what is depicted or asserted by (the words of) a text."⁶² Events which are depicted, the manner in which events are depicted, and ideas all have significance. Levels three and four are implication and application, which ascribe meaning to the act of writing (that and how something was written is significant, that is, it has implications) and *for* the reader (it applies to him, is significant for him) respectively.⁶³

⁶⁰J. W. Voelz, "The problem of 'meaning' in texts," *Neotestamentica* 23 (1989), pp. 33-43.

⁶¹"Problem of 'meaning'," p. 33. Raabe refers to this as "the level of translation" ("Deliberate Ambiguity," p. 1).

⁶²"Problem of 'meaning'," p. 34.

⁶³"Problem of 'meaning'," pp. 34-35.

To this point, this thesis has been primarily concerned with establishing the sense of Lev. 17:10-12. The following is an attempt to render this sense; note the difficulty in translating the ambiguity of verse 11c and the word $\Psi\Omega$ in verse 12.

[If] anyone of the house of Israel or of the resident aliens residing among them consumes any blood, [then] I will set my face against the life of the one consuming the blood and I will cut it off from among its people because the life of the flesh is the blood. I have given it for you upon the altar to atone for your lives: because the blood is the life which is for the life, it atones. For this reason I have said to the sons of Israel, "Not a person among you will consume blood, nor will the resident alien residing among you."

While there may be quibbles about the syntactic relationship between component parts, and the ambiguity verse 11c is not elsewhere recognized, this translation largely conforms with that of other commentators.

The move from sense to significance is rather more challenging. The chief problem is that of matrixing (i.e., connecting events and ideas).⁶⁴ On the one hand, significance can be found by matrixing verses 10-12 only with themselves: the significance is that because of the close identification of blood with life and because of the use of blood in sacrifice one should not eat blood. This is virtually a restatement of the sense of the paragraph. In this case, significance is being "made explicit on the level

⁶⁴Voelz, "Problem of 'meaning'," p. 36.

of sense."⁶⁵

But, like most passages of Scripture, there is something about the text which seems (at least, to this reader and most commentators!) to reach beyond the confines of the paragraph. This is especially the case with respect to verse 11b, and the question of what is signified by the statement "I have given the blood for you upon the altar." Milgrom and Brichto seek to limit the matrix to the שְׁלֵמִים mentioned in verses 5-7. Their basis for such a limitation is that since the context speaks about eating blood, and only the שְׁלֵמִים are consumed by the one sacrificing, then this sacrifice must be the referent. On the other hand, Rodriguez and others extend the matrix to include the whole sacrificial cultus. Rodriguez does so on the basis of the use of the general term זָבַח, which allows for different ways in which the blood is brought in contact with the altar. Further support for this position is found in the use of the phrase עַל הַזֶּבֶחַ, which is used in the explanatory clauses of chapters 4 and 5 (which discuss the זָבַח הַשֶּׁמֶט and the זָבַח הַשֶּׁמֶט respectively), and in the proximity of verse 8, which contains the merism עַל הַזֶּבֶחַ אֶל-הַזֶּבֶחַ.

In this thesis, the matrix proposed by Rodriguez is preferred over the one suggested by Milgrom. In fact, while Milgrom's reading of the text in a non-substitutionary way has been considered legitimate, it is contended that

⁶⁵Voelz, "Problem of 'meaning'," p. 38.

Milgrom's attempt to limit the matrix constitutes an *illegitimate* reading. The reason for reckoning Milgrom's matrix to be illegitimate is two-fold.

1) The syntax of the text. Milgrom attempts to limit verse 11 to the שְׁלֵמִים on the grounds that verse 10 speaks of eating blood. But this ignores the fact that *all* blood is forbidden for consumption, whereas only some animals are fit for sacrifice. The blood which is prohibited is not necessarily the same blood given on the altar. He further disregards the structure of the chapter, which indicates that verses 10-12 are to be considered more closely connected to verses 8-9 than to verses 3-7.

2) The internal contradictions of Milgrom's argument. One of Milgrom's basic (hermeneutical) contentions is that there is no sacrifice for capital offense.⁶⁶ But the phrase $\text{לִנְפֹךְ עַל-נַפְשׁוֹ}$ indicates that such a sin (specifically, the sin of shedding blood) has been committed. The proposed resolution claims that by understanding verse 11 to be limited to the שְׁלֵמִים , one can see that it provides a way for the Israelite (or sojourner) to expiate for his life which he endangers by the killing the animal. In other words, by understanding the שְׁלֵמִים , "the only sacrifice without an

⁶⁶"Prolegomenon," p. 101. He cites Num. 15:30-31 for support. Lyonnet offers a similar objection when he opposes substitution (*Sin, Sacrifice, and Redemption*, pp. 177-178).

expiatory function"⁶⁷ in an expiatory manner, the text provides a sacrifice for a capital offense for which no sacrifice is permitted. This, in turn, provides the rationale for rejecting a substitutionary reading of the text. Any matrix which is defended by such a self-contradictory argument stands virtually defenseless.

Matrixing is basically the hermeneutic of the reader at work. Seeing how a given reader matrixes material gives insight into his hermeneutic. So, when scholars such as Robertson Smith, Gray, and Rowley fail to include Lev. 17:11 in their matrix (at least in any significant manner) it indicates that their hermeneutic rejects the verse as being incompatible.⁶⁸ Likewise, when men such as de Vaux and Lyonnet read the text in a non-substitutionary way, this points to a viewpoint which understands concepts like atonement, forgiveness, and purification as processes, whereas substitution indicates a more forensic (fiat) view of these aspects of sacrifice. In Milgrom's case, his basic hermeneutic (as discussed above, §2.3, "Analysis of Milgrom's Theory") is concerned with freeing sacrifices like the זָבַח from the "theologi-cally foreign notion of sin" and

⁶⁷"Prolegomenon," p. 103.

⁶⁸Dennis J. McCarthy's conclusion that Lev. 17:11 is unique in the Ancient Near East is suggestive as to why those with a *Religionsgeschichte* orientation would be uncomfortable with the verse ("The Symbolism of Blood and Sacrifice," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 88 [1969], pp. 166-176; cf. pp. 169-170, 176.

reading the sacrifices instead through the allegorical filters of rabbinic Judaism, which divorces the spiritual from the physical.

On the other hand, readers such as Rodriguez, Wenham, Leon Morris, G. E. Wright and von Rad, who understand Lev. 17:11 in the context (matrix) of sacrifices in general, work with a hermeneutic which sees the Hebrew cultus as being primarily a God-to-man proposition, and which takes substitution for granted. Elliger, on the basis of the וְגַלְגַּל reads Lev. 17:11 with the *lex talionis*.⁶⁹ The title of Rodriguez's work, *Substitution in the Hebrew Cultus*, begs the question and presupposes the existence of substitutionary atonement; the book is then a garnering of evidence thereof. Leviticus 17:11 is matrixed by Rodriguez not only with the sacrificial cultus in general but also with Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac and the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53. Morris' title, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, likewise indicates his matrix: Old Testament sacrifice will be understood in light of the sacrifice of Christ on Calvary.

This raises a further question with respect to the significance of Lev. 17:11. With what in the New Testament is one to matrix this verse? Rodriguez nowhere matrixes with the New Testament at all. Morris matrixes Lev. 17:11 with numerous Old Testament passages, and then moves on to

⁶⁹Leviticus, p. 228.

show how this body of evidence is matrixed with the sacrifice of Christ.⁷⁰ Wenham connects this verse explicitly with the death of Christ, but also with the Lord's Supper.⁷¹ Such matrixing distinguishes further between different hermeneutical (confessional) positions. It leads in the direction of application and pragmatics, which will be discussed in the final chapter.

But it also raises an important question concerning the significance of the present verse. That is, is substitution the primary significance of Lev. 17:11 and therefore of the Hebrew sacrificial system? The fact that one can have a legitimate reading of the text which is non-substitutionary perhaps indicates it is not. That there is a substitutionary element to sacrifice is explicitly stated in Lev. 1:4. But in order to defend substitution in 17:11, one must be disposed to see it in the phrases such as *וְשָׁחַ*. While this is a legitimate, and even valid, reading of the text,⁷² it is not explicit. The text offers another view of sacrifice which is usually overshadowed by the question of substitution. That is, it states that blood atones

⁷⁰*The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1965), pp. 114-121; 121ff.

⁷¹*Leviticus*, p. 247; 248.

⁷²The availability of the explicit statement concerning substitution gives validity in this case.

because "I myself have given it for you upon the altar." This, it is here contended, is the key statement of the significance of sacrifice, what Janowski calls "*die göttliche Gabe des Sühnemittels Blut*."⁷³ Elliger as well argues for this as the key significance of the verse: "*man darf nicht fragen, wieso das Blut auf dem Altar solche Wirkung haben kann; Jahwe selbst hat es so geordnet, und das genügt*."⁷⁴ The genius of Old Testament sacrifice is that the sacrifices were given as means of atonement, which emphasizes that in the cultus God comes to man, not vice versa.⁷⁵

Finally, to those who object to matrixing Lev. 17:11 with the general sacrificial cultus on the grounds of its separation from the descriptions of those sacrifices in Leviticus 1-5 (which is what Milgrom's matrix attempts to do), the following responses are offered.

⁷³*Sühne als Heilsgeschehen*, p. 247.

⁷⁴*Leviticus*, p. 228: "one should not ask, how it is that the blood on the altar can have such effect [atonement]; Yahweh himself has so ordained it, and that is sufficient."

⁷⁵Rodriguez indeed brings out the divine gift aspect of blood, but then reverts to speculation regarding the mechanics, i.e., blood as the vehicle through which sin is brought into the presence of God (*Substitution*, p. 255; cf. Zohar, "Repentance," p. 616). There is thus a subtle shift from God as giver to man as giver. This interpretative shift obscures the textual emphasis on God as the one who gives the blood for the purpose of atonement.

1) The proximity of Lev. 17:11 to the sacrifices of the Day of Atonement (chapter 16) and the sacrificial content of chapter 17 itself provide sufficient context for a statement on the general nature of sacrifice.

2) Two statements need not be side by side in order to be legitimately matrixed. The fact that the importance of altars is spelled out in Exod. 20:24 does not preclude it providing the significance for the statement that Yahweh gives blood on the altar in Lev. 17:11. Milgrom also is willing to matrix beyond immediate context, such as when he connects verse 11bδ with Exod. 30 and Num. 31.

3) A parallel may be seen in the Gospel of Matthew. In Matt. 20:28, Jesus makes the statement ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου οὐκ ἦλθεν διακονηθῆναι ἀλλὰ διακονῆσαι καὶ δοῦναι τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ λυτρον ἀντι πολλῶν. He is here interpreting (stating the significance of) his (sacrificial) death on the cross in a context which is removed from the description of the actual event. But there has already been a reference to what is going to befall him (vv. 18-19). While the immediate context has to do with humility, Jesus takes the opportunity to interpret his ultimate act of humility: his death (cf. Phil. 2:5-11). In the same way, sacrifice is introduced in Leviticus 17 in verses 5-7 and 8-9. Though in verse 10 the immediate concern is blood consumption, the opportunity is taken to explain the significance of

sacrificial blood.

The significance of Lev. 17:11 is that, while providing the rationale for God's prohibition against blood consumption, it also states the basic, underlying principle of the sacrificial cultus: that the sacrifices were means of atonement, God's gift to sinful man. Working as it does within the Lutheran hermeneutic, with its emphasis on sacramentalism, this thesis finds the evidence for such a matrix, which then extends into the New Testament in juxtaposition with the Lord's Supper, compelling.

4.4. The Function of Leviticus 17:10-12

The function of verse 11 within its paragraph has already been discussed. It operates primarily as a rationale for the prohibition against eating blood. It is now necessary to see how this paragraph, and especially verse 11, affects its context.

In the structure of chapter 17, verses 10-12 make up the middle paragraph of three in the second half of the chapter. It is central not only in position but also in content. If these verses were removed,⁷⁶ there would be no apparent connection between verses 8-9 and 13-14(15-16). The first paragraph deals with temple sacrifices; the second with eating game animals. Verses 10-12 provide a link. They introduce both the theme of blood-consumption and the

⁷⁶As happened in the Cairo geniza codex; see above, §3.2, "Translation Notes."

idea of the blood-life identification which are picked up in verses 13-14(15-16). At the same time, the emphasis on sacrificial blood as the God-given means of atonement reflects back upon verses 8-9. It is thus the key paragraph in this section of Leviticus 17.

Verse 11 itself has an impact on each of the other paragraphs. Verses 8-9 contain the prohibition against offering sacrifices away from the tabernacle, and the divine penalty associated with its violation, but no reason for the proscription. One reason may be derived from the preceding section (v. 7): the intent is to avoid pagan worship. Another, more positive reason is provided when verse 11 is matrixed with verses 8-9: the purpose of the sacrifices is to provide atonement. But this only occurs "on the altar," the place where God has attached his promised presence of blessing. So in mandating the bringing of sacrifices to the tabernacle, God is emphasizing the need for atonement, without which one stands under divine judgement.

The impact of verse 11 on the following paragraph is different. In verses 13-14(15-16). the reason for the proscription is provided in verse 14. But given the similarity of the prohibitions against blood consumption in verses 10 and 13, it is to be noted that the rationale in verse 14 is limited to the blood-life identification (which is repeated three times in the one verse). The connection between these paragraphs may be phrased as a question:

"Given that God has given the blood of sacrifices as a means of atonement, why is all blood consumption prohibited, even the blood from a non-sacrificial animal which has no expiatory value?" Verse 13 emphasizes that the eating of such blood is indeed still forbidden, and verse 14 gives the blood-life relationship as the reason. But verse 11 juxtaposes the means of atonement aspect of blood with the life identification aspect. This may be matrixed with verse 14, yielding a conclusion that the blood of game, while non-expiatory, is a reminder of expiation. Yahweh is thus teaching his people to have respect, not for life *per se*, but for blood which in other circumstances serves as a means of atonement.⁷⁷

Verse 11, which is seen as the key verse in Lev. 17:8-16, also has an impact on verses 1-7. In this section, slaughtering is prohibited apart from the tabernacle, with the explicit purpose of putting a stop to pagan sacrifices (v. 7). The purpose is stated positively in verse 6, where the proper use of the blood is stated: וזרק הנהן אח-הרים על- (and the priest will splash the blood upon the altar of Yahweh"). Verse 11 in turn gives the significance of the blood placed/splashed on Yahweh's altar: it is the means of atonement.

⁷⁷This is brought out especially in Deut. 12:20-25, where an animal whose blood may be used for this purpose is slaughtered away from the altar. In such a circumstance, the blood is non-expiatory; but respect for the blood is still required.

The influence of verse 11 also extends beyond the chapter. It makes explicit the reason for the blood-rites on the Day of Atonement (chapter 16) as well as the sacrifices in general (chapters 1-7). Though it is beyond the scope of this thesis, it would be interesting to explore in detail how Lev. 17:11 influences the theology of sacrifice in the Old Testament as a whole, both those places where it is viewed positively, and especially where sacrifice is opposed. The present examination suggests that the reason for the latter instances is related to the confusion as to who is the active agent in sacrifice, God or man? The emphasis in Lev. 17:11 is clearly on God as the one who is active through his provision of the blood as a means of atonement, and his promise of presence and blessing on the altar.

CHAPTER V

PRAGMATICS AND CONCLUSIONS

The fourth level of meaning identified by J. W. Voelz is "application," the "meaning" that a given text has for a given reader or group of readers.¹ This level is especially problematic for the modern reader when the text deals with matters such as cultic practices which are no longer in use. The Book of Leviticus has until recently not attracted much non-technical attention. The problem of application--the apparent distance between the reader and the world of the text, thus an apparent lack of relevance--contributed to this inattention, and has resulted in the various attempts observed in §3.3.1 which tend to "spiritualize" the worship of Israel.

In this chapter, the application of the text, Lev. 17:11, to the contemporary reader will be attempted. This will involve a study of the pragmatics of the text, that is,

¹J. W. Voelz, "The problem of 'meaning' in texts," *Neotestamentica* 23 (1989), p. 35. The third level, implication, has not been dealt with in this thesis to this point. To a certain degree, it is subsumed into the following discussion.

an examination of what the text does to the reader.² Such a study is open to the charge of subjectivity, and rightly so. This is one reader's assessment of the text. But, as was argued in the Introduction, objectivity is a myth (§1.1). The best that can be hoped for is that a reader honestly confronts and openly uses his hermeneutic, rather than hiding behind claims of objectivity; that the reader strives to give a legitimate reading of the text (that is, one which deals with the data provided in the text); and that said reader is able to defend the validity of the suggested reading while allowing for discussion.

5.1 Key Features of the Pragmatics of Lev. 17:11

The discussion of the pragmatics of the text, Lev. 17:11, will be divided into two parts. In the first, textual features which influence the reading will be examined. In the second, the various hermeneutics with which readers operate and their effect on the reading will be compared and discussed.

²On pragmatics, see Voelz, "Where Are We Now? Where Are We Going? An Examination of the State of the Study: The Role of the Reader in the Interpretation of the NT Seminar-SNTS," unpublished paper presented to Role of the Reader Seminar in Dublin, Ireland, July 1989, pp. 5-6; also Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "The Semantics of Biblical Literature: Truth and Scripture's Diverse Literary Forms," in *Hermeneutics, Authority, and Canon*, edited by D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986), pp. 49-104.

5.1.1 Textual Features

In §3.3.1, the position of Leviticus 17 in the structure of the book was debated; that is, does it rightly belong with the so-called "Holiness Code" (Leviticus 18-26) or with the chapters which preceded it (Leviticus 1-16)? It was posited that chapter 17 serves as a hinge between the two parts of the book. Such a debate, however, seems to assume a disunity of the book. For a reader taking Leviticus as a whole (whether that unity is ascribed to an original [Mosaic] author or a final redactor in the canonizing community), the proper description of the position of the chapter is that it follows chapter 16, the description of the Day of Atonement.

Following the conclusion of the Day of Atonement rubrics and the discussion of its theological significance, the reader is next presented in Lev. 17:3 with a more general situation, that is, the general slaughtering of sacrificial animals for non-sacrificial (gastronomic) purposes by the Israelites.³ The reader is told that such slaughter is only to take place at the tabernacle, and that if it is not, the one slaughtering the animal will be held guilty of bloodshed. The reason for such judgement is twofold: the limitation of slaughter to the sanctuary is

³But see Baruch A. Levine, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Leviticus* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989), pp. 112-113. Levine, contrary to the majority of scholars, understands וּנְבַח as meaning "sacrifice." See above, §3.2, "Translation Notes," on v. 3.

designed to put an end to pagan sacrifices; it also provides opportunity for the proper use of blood upon the altar as "an aroma of appeasement to Yahweh" (לְרִיחַ נִיחַח יְהוָה). This phrase (which is used as the purpose clause in Leviticus 1-3), as well as the content of the paragraph, draws attention to the fact that the sacrifices under consideration here are the **שְׁלָמִים**.

Two items in this first paragraph strike this reader as being pragmatically significant. First, the prohibition against profane slaughtering is given only to the Israelites.⁴ The sojourners (*contra* LXX) are not under this proscription. Second, both positive and negative uses of blood are presented as they relate to sacrifice. It is wrong to offer the blood to demons. It is proper to use it for the God-given purpose of appeasing the divine wrath.

Both of these items come into play when the reader moves on to the second paragraph, verses 8-9. Here the intended audience/reader is expanded to include the resident aliens as well as the people of Israel. The specific concern in the paragraph is with the offering of sacrifices

⁴This prohibition is later modified in Deut. 12:23, where the fact that many Israelites will live at a great distance from the sanctuary when they live in Canaan is taken into account. Of course, if Levine is correct (see previous note), there is no potential contradiction between Deuteronomy 12 and Leviticus 17.

in general, reading *עלה אר-יִזְכֶּה* as a merism.⁵ Such sacrificing is limited to the tabernacle. The reason for this limitation is not stated; however, the proper and improper use of sacrificial blood, stated in the previous verses, probably inform the current prohibition.

It seems to this reader that the second paragraph serves an expansive function, on the one hand, and a focusing function on the other. It expands the reader's viewpoint by bringing non-Israelites into the picture and by encompassing all sacrifices, not just the *שְׁלֵמִים*. By means of the first expansion, the reader understands the difference between the first and second paragraphs as the difference between slaughter with implicit sacrificial overtones and slaughter explicitly for sacrifice. Such a distinction is permitted for non-Israelites, but not for the chosen people of Yahweh. The second expansion achieves something similar: it moves the context from the "secular" realm (slaughter for food) to the "sacred" (slaughter as part of Israel's worship). One of the results of this expansion, then, is to intensify the focus on sacrifice as an integral part of Israelite worship; so integral a part, in fact, that even resident aliens were not permitted to

⁵This is why Levine's reading of the first paragraph is not preferred. It would seem to contradict the second paragraph: if all sacrificing apart from the sanctuary is prohibited to the sojourners, this would necessarily include the slaughter for the *שְׁלֵמִים*; but vv. 3-7 appear to allow sojourners to slaughter (*טחח*) where the Israelites cannot.

sacrifice to other gods while sojourning among Yahweh's people. The implication is that Yahweh alone is to be worshiped (cf. Exod. 20:3-6).

The third paragraph continues to expand. Both Israelites and non-Israelites are again included in the intended audience. But the concern is now expanded in a different direction from verses 8-9. There the expansion was from one type of sacrifice to sacrifice in general. In verses 10-12, one aspect of slaughtering, whether for sacrifice or for food, is expanded upon: the disposition of the blood, which is not to be eaten. The reason for such a prohibition is that blood and life are identified; moreover, blood is given by Yahweh upon the altar for atonement. The chiasmic structure of the paragraph in general and of verse 11 specifically focuses the reader's attention on the statement *וְאֲנִי נָחַתִּי לָכֶם עַל-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ לְכַפֵּר עַל-נַפְשֵׁיכֶם* ("and I myself have given it to you upon the altar to atone for your lives"). In addition, there are several other passages in the Old Testament which state that the life-blood relationship is the reason for not eating blood (Gen. 9:4; Lev. 17:14; Deut. 12:23); this statement, that blood is a means of atonement (*Sühnemittel*), is what sets Lev. 17:11 apart.

Again, this paragraph focuses by means of expansion. While it expands upon one aspect of slaughtering, it focuses on a propositional truth regarding sacrifice. The expansion which took place in verses 8-9, as well as the use of the

phrase *לִכְפֹּר עַל* (which is not used elsewhere of the *עֲלֵמִים* alone⁶) encourages the reader to understand the phrase inclusively, that is, as referring to sacrificial worship in general. In turn, the focus on the middle colon of verse 11 indicates to this reader that the *emphasis* is upon the fact that Yahweh gives the blood, not upon the question of substitution.

The expansion continues. From the slaughtering of sacrificial animals, the scope is now expanded to include game taken in the hunt. As with all slaughtering, no blood is to be eaten. But it is significant that such animals need not be brought to the altar of Yahweh, nor is any expiatory or propitiatory nature attached to such blood. It is to be drained onto the ground and not eaten because of the life-blood relationship. This is the case also with sacrificial animals slaughtered for food once the Israelites settle in Canaan.

The primary significance of this fourth paragraph, in this reader's opinion, is that verses 13-14 show the limitations of the expansion. There is, finally, a point at which a distinction is made between secular and sacred. In this case, it is the point where non-sacrificial animals are killed for non-sacrificial purposes. The blood is still to

⁶Hence Jacob Milgrom's confusion when he tries to limit Lev. 17:11 to the *עֲלֵמִים* ("A Prolegomenon to Leviticus 17:11," *Studies in Cultic Theology and Terminology* [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1983], pp. 96-103).

be treated reverently, as life, but there is no sense of atonement being attached to it.

The appendix to the fourth paragraph moves even further away from the starting point, but the principle of expansion remains. Now the issue is extended to include eating carrion, animals which died and were not slaughtered, hence retaining their blood. In such cases, the eater is unclean and must undergo ritual cleansing. But this is a far cry from the penalty prescribed in the main paragraphs: the cutting off of the individual from his people, whether this refers to death or to exile.

These features suggest the following pragmatics (implications/applications) of the text to this reader:

1. To warn the people against pagan worship.
2. To increase in the people an appreciation of Israelite worship, especially as regards the God-to-man direction of worship, and the nature of Yahweh as a God who works through means.
3. To define the distinction between the sacred and the secular, while indicating that areas where the distinction is blurred exist.

5.1.2 Second-Textual Features: Reader and Hermeneutic

The reader is not a *tabula rasa*; nor does the reader read in a vacuum. Objectivity is neither a goal nor a possibility in reading. The ability to identify one's hermeneutic is thus an important albeit often ignored aspect

of exegesis.

In the previous chapter, Milgrom's reading of the text was judged to be legitimate (but invalid) with respect to the question of substitution, but illegitimate with respect to his limiting the matrix to the $\square\text{ל}^{\text{ל}}\Psi$. What this amounts to is a judgement about Milgrom's hermeneutic. This hermeneutic is never explicitly stated, but from his various writings one is able to piece together some of his second text. Some key elements of this second text seem to be:

1. Anthropological rather than theological explanations of sacrifice. Purification, not forgiveness, is the key.
2. Allegorical or symbolic readings of the sacrifices themselves. This is the divorce between physical and spiritual that Zohar observes.⁷ It is also a significant element of Milgrom's attempt to read the text in continuity with the rabbinic interpreters.
3. Opposition to Christian readings of the text. This is implicit in his reference to a "theologically foreign notion of sin"⁸ and in his

⁷Noam Zohar, "Repentance and Purification: The Significance and Semantics of $\Pi\text{א}\Psi\Pi$ in the Pentateuch," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 107 (1988), pp. 609-618; cf. p. 610.

⁸"Sin-offering or Purification-offering?" in *Studies*, pp. 67-69; cf. pp. 68-69.

attempt to deny a substitutionary reading of Lev. 17:11.⁹

But does the hermeneutic work? In this reader's opinion it does not. The contradictory nature of Milgrom's argument, which has already been discussed (see §2.3 and §4.3, above), indicates the internal weakness. Just as his attempt to make the זָבִיחַ a sacrifice for purifying the temple fails to account for the textual statement that the one sacrificing is the one who receives the benefit of the sacrifice through the forgiveness of sin (the effect on the sanctuary, if any, is never stated apart from the Day of Atonement ceremony), so Milgrom's attempt to limit Lev. 17:11 to the זָבִיחַ fails to explain in a non-contradictory manner the use of the verb זָבַח , which is otherwise used either of sacrifice in general or of the זָבִיחַ and זָבַח . Because Milgrom's hermeneutic leads him to overlook or at least fail to account for textual data, his reading is rejected.

What about the hermeneutic of Angel Rodriguez¹⁰ and Noam Zohar? Initially, these would seem to be "strange

⁹Though it must be conceded that a substitutionary reading is offered by Levine, a Jewish commentator (*Leviticus*, p. 115), and Lyonnet, a Christian reader, rejects substitution in this verse (Stanislas Lyonnet and Leopold Sabourin, *Sin, Redemption, and Sacrifice* [Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1970], pp. 175-181).

¹⁰*Substitution in the Hebrew Cultus* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1979).

bedfellows," but their basic hermeneutics are more similar than otherwise. Both read Lev. 17:11 in the broader context of sacrifice in general. Both focus on the importance of rubrics in interpreting the cultus. Most importantly, both limit the matrix to the Old Testament. The result in each case is a reading which, in spite of Rodriguez's ultimate ascription of the working of the sacrifice to "a divine act of love,"¹¹ understands expiation/atonement to mean the dissociation of man from his sin in confession and the bringing of that sin, now contained in the blood of the animal, into the presence of Yahweh. Even though Zohar balks at the notion of substitution (preferring the term "transfer") which for Rodriguez is paramount, the locus of activity is on man's end. God commands and accepts the sacrifice, thereby giving forgiveness; but it is the worshipper's actions which bring this about.

The textual datum left unaccounted for is the emphatic $\text{וְהָיָה דָּמָם$. Rodriguez initially draws attention to it, but then backs away. Zohar never mentions it. Both focus on the blood. Rodriguez focuses on the blood which is accepted by Yahweh as a substitute, Zohar on the blood as the proper medium for the transfer of impurity from the $\text{וְהָיָה$ of the person. Both Zohar and Rodriguez offer legitimate readings of the text, that is, their readings are based on textual evidence. But their hermeneutic, according to this reader,

¹¹*Substitution*, p. 260.

fails to adequately account for important data.¹²

For this reader, the $\text{וְהַיְיָ} \text{וְהַיְיָ}$ is the crux of the passage. For this reason, the question of substitution--the question most commentators make the cornerstone of the exegesis of Lev. 17:11--is left open (for the moment). The ambiguity of the text allows either reading to stand. The arguments for a substitutionary reading are believed to be stronger, but not definitive. To a certain extent, the argument over whether sacrifice is substitutionary or not is similar to the debate over the meaning of Christ's sacrifice as discussed in 2 Cor. 5:14-21. Does Paul mean to say that Jesus' death was substitutionary or representative?¹³ In

¹²The difference between the hermeneutics which are used by Rodriguez and Zohar hinges on substitution. In reading Lev. 17:11, the key element of Rodriguez's hermeneutic is that he seeks to read the text in a substitutionary way--thus, the emphasis on blood as substitute. (The very title of his book begs the question.) For Zohar, the main plank of his hermeneutic is that he give the cultus a non-substitutionary reading--thus, his view of blood as the receptacle of impurity. This non-substitutionary reading is one of the few points on which he and Milgrom agree.

¹³Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Letter of Paul to the Corinthians* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark Ltd., 1915); Vincent Taylor, *The Atonement in New Testament Teaching* (London: The Epworth Press, 1958); and Dunn, "Paul's Understanding of the Death of Jesus," *Reconciliation and Hope: New Testament Essays on Atonement and Eschatology Presented to L.L. Morris on His 60th Birthday*, edited by Robert Banks (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974), pp. 125-141, all argue against substitution. On the other side, Riesenfeld, "ὄπερ," TDNT 8: 508-513; Rudolph Bultmann, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, translated by Roy A. Harrisville (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1985); and Frederick Danker, *II Corinthians* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1989) argue for a substitutionary reading.

both cases, the concern seems to be that substitution implies something totally *extra nos*; the locus of activity is totally in God. There seems to be a desire to make efficacy of the sacrifice dependent upon man's faith by which he identifies with the victim. This is the case also with Rodriguez.¹⁴

The issue of substitution tends to cloud the emphasis which this reader finds in the text. The evidence for this emphasis is the ׁׁׁׁ ׁׁׁ . Yahweh is the giver, not just the initiator, of atonement. He gives the sacrificial blood upon the altar. This emphasis removes two potential misunderstandings of the sacrifice. First, that there is another deity involved. This possibility was raised in verses 3-7 in connection with pagan sacrifices; but the notion is dismissed definitively. But so is the idea that man is an active participant in the drama of atonement. True, he plays an "active" part in the ritual: he brings the animal, lays hands on its head, even, in some cases, did the slaughtering. But when it comes to what is happening through the ritual, man is rendered passive. Yahweh gives the blood for atonement, he does not just accept it. The priest, Yahweh's instrumentality, brings it to the altar. Yahweh accepts (again through the priest) the victim in the sacrificer's place (so Lev. 1:4, the main text which renders

¹⁴This view is well presented in David L. Wheeler's *A Relational View of the Atonement: Prolegomenon to a Reconstruction of the Doctrine* (New York: Peter Lang, 1989).

a substitutionary reading of Lev. 17:11 preferable to a non-substitutionary one). Yahweh forgives sins through the sacrifice. The worshiper is purely passive: the animal is accepted (by Yahweh) for him; he is forgiven (by Yahweh) through the atoning sacrifice; the blood is given for him by Yahweh.

The hermeneutic of this reader leads to a reading of the text which emphasizes the means of grace aspect. This underlies a major difference between the matrix of Rodriguez and that of the present reader. Rodriguez matrixes Lev. 17:11 with the sacrifice of Isaac (Genesis 22) and the Suffering Servant (Isaiah 53--with whom he never identifies Jesus). His hermeneutic focuses on sacrifice as substitution. On the other hand, it seems to this reader that the matrix for understanding this verse needs to be extended through Isa. 53 to include Matt. 20:28 (which was discussed above), but that it must especially include the Last Supper pericopes (Matt. 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-25). The primary connection is considered to be between Lev. 17:11 and the passages which institute the Lord's Supper. The emphasis in both cases is on body/blood given for the recipient for forgiveness. There remains a substitutionary stratum which needs to be discerned; thus, the matrix does not exclude explicitly substitutionary passages. But the emphasis is seen to be on God working

forgiveness through means.¹⁵

Such a reading is shared by George Knight¹⁶ and, to a lesser degree, Gordon Wenham.¹⁷ The latter matrixes Lev. 17:11 with Jesus' statement in John 6:54, "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life," and from there moves to the Lord's Supper. But he reads the words "This is my blood" only as a reminder "that it is only through his Savior's death. . .that he enjoys eternal life."¹⁸ He shies away from any direct ascription, either to the sacrifices or to the Lord's Supper, of forgiveness given through means.

Not so with Knight. Grace is emphasized, as are the means of grace which are given to keep people, brought into the kingdom of God through circumcision/baptism, from

¹⁵Indeed, it might be argued on the basis of Hebrews 9 that Christ's death is the only truly substitutionary sacrifice, and that the substitutionary overtones of the Old Testament cultus foreshadowed his death just as the New Testament sacraments remind the worshiper of that death. Thus, in both cases, the substitutionary element is present; but the means of grace aspect is dominant.

¹⁶George A. F. Knight, *Leviticus* (Daily Study Bible-Old Testament) (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981), pp. 93-96).

¹⁷Gordon Wenham, *Leviticus* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979), p. 248.

¹⁸Wenham, *Leviticus*, p. 248.

falling away from the kingdom.¹⁹ Coupled with this is his assertion that "When God says ' . . . then you will be forgiven,' you are, in fact, forgiven."²⁰ This forgiveness is fact, not simply prophecy of what is to come.

From the foregoing discussion, a list may be drawn showing the differences between legitimate, illegitimate, valid, and invalid readings of Lev. 17:11.

1. Illegitimate. An illegitimate reading is one which in some way violates the *sense* of the text. In the present instance, any reading which limits the referent of verse 11b to one specific sacrifice, or which makes man's activity in sacrifice paramount, is regarded as illegitimate. So Milgrom's and Brichto's attempts to limit the matrix to the $\square\text{למי}$ are deemed illegitimate since (a) the text, in verses 8-9, indicates a broader application, and (b) such a reading is rife with contradictions. Likewise, Zohar's reading, which emphasizes man's dissociation of sin, is illegitimate in view of the emphatic למי in the text. An illegitimate reading cannot be valid.

2. Legitimate. A legitimate reading is one which is supported by the sense of the text. So, for example, both substitutionary and non-substitutionary readings are

¹⁹Knight, *Leviticus*, p. 96.

²⁰*Leviticus*, p. 93.

legitimate, since the sense of the text neither precludes substitution nor does it make it explicit. A legitimate reading, however, may have a greater or lesser degree of validity.

3. Invalid. The validity of a (legitimate) reading is determined by examining the hermeneutic (second text) with which the reader works, and asking whether it adequately handles all the data. So, for example, a reading which, while giving prior place to God's action, continues to make man's action significant in obtaining grace, is invalid. Thus, Rodriguez initially emphasizes the divine gift aspect of sacrifice, but he ultimately sees the bringing of blood and the worshipper's identification with the victim as significant. This indicates a second text which is not able to grasp the *sola gratia* aspect of sacrifice. In the same way readings which fail to recognize the substitutionary aspect of sacrifice are considered legitimate but invalid, since they fail to account for the explicitly substitutionary language of related passages such as Lev. 1:4. A further problem for such readings is the ambiguous nature of Lev. 17:11c, which may be read as emphasizing either substitution or expiation, but since these two are not mutually exclusive should perhaps be read as emphasizing both. This reader would also regard readings, such as Rodriguez's and Levine's, which fail to extend the matrix into the New Testament as invalid. Jesus'

use of sacrificial language in reference both to his death and to the Lord's Supper, as well as the apostolic writings (notably Hebrews) which draw this matrix make such a reading necessary.²¹ Such a claim is roughly equivalent to Milgrom's insistence that the "Hebrew Bible" be read through the rabbis. But it brings the discussion back to basics. The issue is whether Christianity or Judaism is the true heir of Israel and its teachings. Inevitably, each will regard the other's reading as invalid.

4. Valid. A valid reading of Lev. 17:11 has two aspects. One is substitution. It recognizes that even while the sense of the text is not explicitly substitutionary, such a reading is encouraged by the ambiguity of verse 11c and made necessary when the whole practice of sacrifice is considered (i.e., the laying on of hands in Lev. 1:4). This is then matrixed with Christ and his death on the cross as the supreme anti-type of the sacrificial types. The second aspect of a valid reading is the more important one. It recognizes the primacy of the emphatic statement that it is who Yahweh gives the blood for atonement. It reads the chiastic arrangement of the verse as focusing the reader's attention on the middle colon rather than on the ends. This reading accepts the substitutionary aspect of sacrifice but notes that the

²¹Knight, especially, brings out the riches of such a matrix. Cf. *Leviticus*, pp. 93-95.

primary concern of the text is to teach that it is Yahweh who, through means, forgives sins. The emphasis is on means of grace (*Sühnemittel*) rather than substitution. This reading then matrixes primarily with means of grace (i.e., Lord's Supper) passages in the New Testament. While primacy is given to means of grace over substitution, it is to be noted that both aspects are necessary to a valid reading. A substitutionary reading which ignores the *Sühnemittel* aspect (e.g., Baruch Levine) or a means of grace reading which denies substitution (e.g., Stanislas Lyonnet) is no longer valid.

5.2 Conclusions

The way in which Lev. 17:11 is read has profound impact on several areas of theology. In this thesis, two loci of Christian dogma have been emphasized: Christology and Sacramentology (means of grace). But ultimately the text is an Old Testament passage and needs to be understood in its original theological context: the life and worship of the people of Israel.

Christologically, Lev. 17:11 provides the theological basis for understanding Christ's death as an atoning sacrifice. According to Lev. 17:11 and related texts there is a substitutionary aspect to the various Old Testament sacrifices. This is picked up in the Fourth Servant Song

(Isa. 52:13-53:12).²² This sacrificial imagery is then used in the Gospels as Jesus speaks about his approaching death "as a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45), and also in his words at the Last Supper (Matt. 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20). This aspect is picked up also in the Epistles (Rom. 3:25; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Tim. 2:6; Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 1:18-19; and especially Hebrews 9). Many of these New Testament texts seem to matrix Christ's death with one sacrifice in particular (so Matt. 26:28 et al. matrix it with the blood of the covenant [Exodus 24]; 1 Peter 1:18-19 with the Passover [Exodus 12]; Hebrews 9 with the Day of Atonement [Leviticus 16]). However, if, as has been maintained in this thesis, Lev. 17:11 serves as the principle statement of the theology underlying all the sacrifices in the Old Testament, the specificity of referent does not prevent that application of this text to Christ's death; indeed, it enhances it. The general theological principle at work in sacrifice, as stated in Lev. 17:11, is worked out in many and various ways in the several sacrifices; these then are brought together and, with that underlying theology intact, help interpret the significance of Christ's death. That is, as the fulfillment of the Old Testament sacrifices (the one sacrifice to which they all pointed), Christ's death is the supreme expression of the principle that God has given the blood to atone for the life

²²Cf. Rodriguez, *Substitution*, pp. 276-301.

of his people, that this one man's life, poured out through the shedding of his blood, took the place of those lives which otherwise stood beneath the wrath of God. The significance of Christ's death is the significance of the sacrifices expressed once for all for the forgiveness of sins.

As the principle of sacrifice, the text also serves to inform the Christian understanding of the Sacraments. This is especially true insofar as it corrects certain misunderstandings of the means of grace, most notably with regard to the question of active agency. Baptism is often understood as an act whereby a person commits his or her life to God; the Lord's Supper is understood as a celebration in which the church remembers, or re-presents, or re-sacrifices, Christ and his death. So also sacrifices in the Old Testament are often (usually?) interpreted as a means whereby man comes to God in an act of either commitment or of repentance, seeking a divine response. Leviticus 17:11 undercuts all such readings by emphasizing that in the sacrifices God comes to man with forgiveness. The sacrifices are not even spoken of as representations or reminders of God's grace and forgiveness: the grace and forgiveness are given to the worshiper through the physical

elements of blood, water, bread and wine. Hence, means of grace, *Sühnemittel*.²³

Finally, Lev. 17:11 serves to emphasize the way in which Yahweh works in the Old Testament: mediately. While he can, and often does, appear and work immediately, the result--if not the intent--of such a mode of operation is fear and trembling (cf. Exod. 20:18-19). In his mercy, Yahweh works through means: means such as Moses and the prophets for proclamation of his word; means such as Aaron and the priesthood for the administration of the sacrifices. In both cases there are two instrumentalities (means) involved. In the first case, it is a human being speaking human words. In the second, it is a human being delivering Yahweh's gifts of atonement and forgiveness through carnal, physical elements such as flesh and blood. The emphasis in

²³Against objections that baptism and the Lord's Supper come across as more "personal" than the Old Testament sacrifices, in that water and bread and wine are administered to the individual worshiper whereas the blood (except in the sacrifice of the covenant and in the ordination sacrifices for Aaron and his sons [Lev. 8:23]) is placed on the altar (which is the foundation of Milgrom's objection to the $\Pi\chi\upsilon\pi$ as a sacrifice for sin), the following two points may be made. First, the laying on of hands establishes the personal connection between the worshiper and the sacrificial victim: the victim's blood is now for him, personally. Second, such objections are an imposition of modern views of what is or is not important (i.e., "personal") on a context which may well have had other ideas. As Gerhard von Rad noted, the texts just do not seem to be overly concerned with the subjective aspect of sacrifice (*Theologie des Alten Testaments. Band I: Die Theologie der geschichtlichen Überlieferungen Israels*. [Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1957], p. 270). The focus remains on the objective, that is, what Yahweh does through the sacrifices.

Lev. 17:11 upon the fact that it is Yahweh himself that is acting in the person of the priest through the instrumentality of the blood teaches the reader to look beyond what mortal eyes can see. Yahweh locates himself on the altar for blessing (Exod. 20:24). Yahweh assures his people that he delivers his forgiveness through the blood on the altar. A gracious God who works through means of grace is a central theological tenet of the Old Testament, and one which prepares for his ultimate sacramental act in the Incarnation.

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