

**Shayla:** Why is the person in Leviticus 17:1-4 charged with murder?

**Leviticus 17:1-4 HCSB** The LORD spoke to Moses: (2) "Speak to Aaron, his sons, and all the Israelites and tell them: This is what the LORD has commanded: (3) Anyone from the house of Israel who slaughters an ox, sheep, or goat in the camp, or slaughters *it* outside the camp, (4) instead of bringing it to the entrance to the tent of meeting to present *it* as an offering to the LORD before His tabernacle--that person will be charged with murder. He has shed blood and must be cut off from his people.

### **Midrash:**

Hundreds of years later, through the prophet Isaiah, Yahweh clarified that no man-made building could possibly house Him.

- **Isaiah 66:1-2 HCSB** This is what the LORD says: Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool. What house could you possibly build for Me? And what place could be My home? (2) My hand made all these things, and so they all came into being. *This is* the LORD's declaration. I will look favorably on this kind of person: one who is humble, submissive in spirit, and who trembles at My word.

Therefore, the issue here was not the particular holiness of the Tabernacle. It also could not be the particular location because the Tabernacle was routinely moved. However, through the prophet Isaiah, the Lord went on to explain what the real problem was.

- **Isaiah 66:3 HCSB** One slaughters an ox, one kills a man; one sacrifices a lamb, one breaks a dog's neck; one offers a grain offering, one offers swine's blood; one offers incense, one praises an idol--all these have chosen their ways and delight in their abominations.

As most people do today, the people in Old Covenant times each had their own ideas about religion. Each one did what he thought was best and all types of vile wickedness was tolerated as a result. However, notice that the idolatrous slaughtering of an ox was put on the same level as the idolatrous killing of a man? I'm not saying that this is the tie, that God was equating killing an animal for idolatrous purposes was equal to murdering a human. I AM saying that we need to understand how abominable the act is to God. For Him, shedding blood – any blood – for the sake of demons is equally offensive.

It's so offensive that it makes Yahweh Sabaoth our enemy.

- **Isaiah 66:4 HCSB** So I will choose their punishment, and I will bring on them what they dread, because I called and no one answered; I spoke and they didn't hear; they did what is evil in My sight and chose what I didn't delight in.
- **Psalms 106:36-43 HCSB** They served their idols, which became a snare to them. (37) They sacrificed their sons and daughters to demons. (38) They shed innocent blood--the blood of their sons and daughters whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan; so the land became polluted with blood. (39) They defiled themselves by their actions and prostituted themselves by their deeds. (40) Therefore the LORD's anger burned against His people, and He abhorred His own inheritance. (41) He handed them over to the nations; those who hated them ruled them. (42) Their enemies oppressed them, and they were subdued under their power. (43) He rescued them many times, but they continued to rebel deliberately and were beaten down by their sin.

Again, we see that idolatry ends up shedding blood on two different levels. Because we all, deep in our hearts, understand the importance of lifeblood and sacrifice, we end up shedding blood for our false gods. Sooner or later we end up killing someone for the sake of the cause. Just look at Islam today and the poor deluded souls who fly airplanes into towers for the sake of their false god. On yet another level, our sins separate us from God and make

Him our enemy and He delivers us over to our enemies. In that process, many people suffer and die.

In Leviticus 17:4, omniscient, timeless God simply looks into the future and sees the end result. He tells us “a person who stubbornly refuses to accept me as I present myself and embraces idolatry will end up getting a lot of people killed.” Best that one die rather than many.