

## Baptism and Communion: Consubstantiation or Just a Memorial?

Do we need to expand our understanding of Baptism and Communion? Can we learn something from what God says He's doing in another Biblical-required religious ceremony — animal sacrifice? Consider this analysis of **Leviticus 17:11**.

### NASB Translation

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

**Leviticus 17:11 (NASB)**

### ESV Translation

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

### Masoretic Translation (BHS)

אֶת־הַדָּם וְהִכְרַתִּי אֹתָהּ מִקֶּרֶב עַמָּהּ: <sup>11</sup> כִּי נֶפֶשׁ  
הַבָּשָׂר בַּדָּם הוּא וְאֲנִי נִתַּתִּיו לָכֶם עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ לְכַפֵּר  
עַל־נַפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם כִּי־הַדָּם הוּא בְּנֶפֶשׁ יְכַפֵּר: <sup>12</sup> עַל־כֵּן

*For the life of the flesh is in **that**<sup>1</sup> blood, and I **Myself**<sup>2</sup> have given it (*that blood*) to you on the altar to atone for your souls because **that**<sup>1</sup> blood is covering (atoning)<sup>3</sup> for the life (soul).*

**Leviticus 17:11 (My Translation)**

### **Note:**

1. **“That”** is rendered in my translation, because the definite article for “*the*” modifies “blood” but also includes the singular demonstrative pronoun אֵלֶּה, following the noun it modifies.
2. **“Myself”** is added because of the intensive use of the independent personal pronoun “I”, which supplements the first person singular form of the verb “*I give*”. Literally, the Hebrew says “. . . **I, I have given** . . .”
3. **“Covering (atoning)”** is substituted for “*atonement*”, because the verb is in an imperfect piel form.

**Possible Implications:** When the people, by faith, brought the animals, God Himself supplied that blood of that specific animal, with each offering, continuously, thus covering their lives (souls). The Jewish animal sacrifices were not just a reminder that they were still in their sin (**Hebrews 10:3, 4**), nor did they just foreshadow the sacrifice of Christ (**Hebrews 10:9, 10, 18**), but God was present in each sacrifice, supplying the atoning blood. The animal sacrifices were more than a memorial and more than a prophetic foreshadow.

Does this mean that Baptism and the Eucharist are more than memorials or foreshadowing? Is God present in them, actively ministering grace to those who participate, by faith? If so, how should this influence how we think and talk about these sacraments?