

Leviticus 5:7-19

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In describing the requirements for the sin offering (קָרְבַּן חַטָּאת), we note in summary that this sacrifice is for unintentional sins, was either sourced from an unblemished animal or the grain of fine flour which is unscented. It involves also a confession from the trespasser and atonement from the priest. Since chapter 4, the sins have included every level of Israeli society: the priest, leadership and the commoner. All are equal before the Law, although each brings a sacrifice that they can personally afford. Unintentional sins include being silent with the truth, ritual uncleanness, and misspoken oaths.

In our discussion of the text, we noted that sacrifices and offerings teach about the holiness of God. God does not tolerate sin, even unintentional sin. He cannot, for He is truly holy and perfect. Unintentional sin is still sin, and even silence and doing nothing is a sin. In the book of Revelation, God vomits out the fence-sitters, those that do nothing in the Church of Laodicea.

We found lots of the grace of God in this passage. Whether rich or poor, God wanted holiness to be evident in everyone. Once awareness of the trespass had come about, there was a desire to be back in relationship with the living God. Recall that the name of this book in Hebrew is 'He called'; this is a calling. We are called to be restored and in right relationship with the Father. And for Moses, there was a way. Everyone has access to restoration. Money was not an obstacle for any Israelite as the flour pancake was just as efficacious as the blood of an animal, which made us ponder the phrase: without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. This verse occurs in Hebrews 9:22 and is not a direct quote from Scripture. Leviticus 17:11 says, 'It is the blood that makes atonement for your life.' How does unscented plain fine flour prove efficacious in this context? This is a tension that we will wrestle with as we continue further into Leviticus.

We also discussed that a rich person has to provide a sacrifice worthy of his wealth. He could not choose to bring the flour pancake in place of an animal if he had the means to purchase the proper animal. We noted that there was a similarity in the story of Ananias and Sapphira for bringing a false offering when they said they were providing all the proceeds of property they had sold. They had not been honest and were literally slain by the Spirit. For ourselves as disciples of Jesus the Messiah, we should always endeavour to give God our best. He has always desired our whole heart and full commitment to walk after Him. Confession was part of the process for forgiveness. Confession teaches us humility in having to publicly admit to the *cohen* that we had sinned. Confession has the implication that you would agree with the Lord that you had indeed sinned. The New Testament also encourages us to make confession both before God (1 John 1:9) and to each other (James 5:16). For many churches and communities today, liturgies contain a prayer of confession or time is taken during worship to privately confess.

The next sacrifice is called the guilt offering, אֲשָׁם. The guilt offering involved essentially the same procedure used with the sin offering but had to do with trespassing against the holy things of the Lord. What are the 'holy things of the Lord'? They are not listed in the text, but part of the restoration involves adding 20 per cent in financial restitution. This has some commentators suggesting the holy things are in regards to tithes, financial vows, first fruits and the like.