

Leviticus Chapter 5

We have been studying in the last lessons, sins of ignorance, now we will get into another type of sin and the offerings made for them.

Verses 1-1

Dealing with unintentional sins continues with an emphasis on sins of omission (verses 1-4).

Lambs/goats (verse 6), birds (verses 7-10), or flour (verses 11-13), were acceptable sacrifices.

Verses 1-5

This call to confession named a few examples of violations for which penitence was the right response:

- (1) Withholding evidence (verse 1);
- (2) Touching something unclean (verses 2-3); and
- (3) Rash oath making (verse 4).

Leviticus 5:1 "And if a soul sin, and hear the voice of swearing, and [is] a witness, whether he hath seen or known [of it]; if he do not utter [it], then he shall bear his iniquity."

“The voice of swearing ... witness”:

“A witness who did not come forward to testify was sinning when he had actually seen a violation or had firsthand knowledge, such as hearing the violator confess to the sin.

This lesson will deal more specifically with sin than the last few lessons.

The Scripture above seems to indicate a concealment of knowledge.

To witness a crime and not report it would possibly be the sin above.

In our courts today, to conceal that type of evidence could make you an accessory to the crime.

We can easily see from this, that when we see a crime committed, we must report it.

To not report a sin in the verse above, would cause you to be guilty, as well as the person who committed the crime.

And you would have to be forgiven the same as the one committing the crime.

Leviticus 5:2 "Or if a soul touch any unclean thing, whether [it be] a carcase of an unclean beast, or a carcase of unclean cattle, or the carcase of unclean creeping things, and [if] it be hidden from him; he also shall be unclean, and guilty."

Meaning an Israelite, for only such were bound by this law, which pronounced a person unclean that touched anything that was so in a ceremonial sense.

This is the general, including whatsoever by the law was unclean.

The particulars follow:

"Whether it be a carcass of an unclean beast":

As the camel, the coney, the hare, and the swine (Lev. 11:2).

"Or a carcass of unclean cattle":

As the horse, and the ass, which were unclean for food, and their dead carcasses not to be touched (Lev. 11:26).

"Or the carcass of unclean creeping things":

Such as are mentioned in (Lev. 11:29).

"And if it be hidden from him":

That he has touched them; or the uncleanness contracted by touching, he having inadvertently done it.

Or being ignorant of the law concerning such uncleanness.

"He also shall be unclean":

In a ceremonial sense, by thus touching them.

"And guilty":

Of a breach of the command which forbids the touching of them.

This is by way of prolepsis or anticipation.

For as yet the law concerning unclean beasts, and creeping things, and pollution by touching them, was not given.

Jarchi and Gersom interpret this guilt, of eating of holy things, and going into the sanctuary when thus defiled.

In the Jewish Misnah it is said, the word "hidden" is twice used, to show that he is guilty, for the ignorance of uncleanness, and for the ignorance of the sanctuary.

Carcase means dead body.

If the animal died of its own volition (was not killed), then it possibly was diseased.

If we look carefully into all of these instructions, we will see that God did everything for a specific reason, and it was usually for the benefit of man.

If a person accidentally touched it, the person could still take a disease from it.

You can see why this instruction was given.

We will get into the way a person could purify themselves when they touched a carcase in a later lesson.

Leviticus 5:3 "Or if he touch the uncleanness of man, whatsoever uncleanness [it be] that a man shall be defiled withal, and it be hid from him; when he knoweth [of it], then he shall be guilty."

The dead body of a man, or the bone of a dead body.

Or a grave, or any menstruous person.

"Whatsoever uncleanness it be that a man shall be defiled withal":

Not morally, but ceremonially.

"And it be hid from him":

He is not sensible that he has touched any thing ceremonially unclean.

"When he knoweth of it, then he shall be guilty":

Acknowledge his guilt, and offer a sacrifice for it, as after directed.

This just specifies, that the same procedure is to be taken with a dead man as was taken with the dead animal.

It goes even further in stating that the man does not have to be dead.

Any uncleanness, such as an issue of blood, would be under this ruling as well.

We know today how important this is, because of all the diseases that are transferred from one person to another through blood, or in some cases just by touching them, such as shaking hands.

Many in our society today have been so frightened of germs that they are afraid to go out of their house for anything.

God does not want us to live in fear, but He does want us to practice cleanliness.

Leviticus 5:4 "Or if a soul swear, pronouncing with [his] lips to do evil, or to do good, whatsoever [it be] that a man shall pronounce with an oath, and it be hid from him; when he knoweth [of it], then he shall be guilty in one of these."

“Swear”:

“Speaking thoughtlessly” suggests a reckless oath for good or bad, i.e., an oath the speaker should not or could not keep.

We are cautioned by Jesus not to swear at all in the following two verses.

Matthew 5:34 "But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne:"

Matthew 5:36 "Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black."

The very best policy, is to do just what Jesus said.

Don't swear, and then you will not be held accountable for what you swear.

One of the most terrible oaths taken in the Bible is Herod's in the next few verses.

Matthew 14:6-11 "But when Herod's birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod." "Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask." "And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger." "And the king was sorry: nevertheless for the oath's sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded [it] to be given [her]." "And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison." "And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought [it] to her mother."

This is one oath that Herod wished he had never taken.

Do not take an oath lightly.

Verses 5-13

Like the burnt offering, the required sin offering provided options for the poor if a lamb was too expensive.

Leviticus 5:5 "And it shall be, when he shall be guilty in one of these [things], that he shall confess that he hath sinned in that [thing]:"

“He shall confess”:

Confession must accompany the sacrifice as the outward expression of a repentant heart which openly acknowledged agreement with God concerning sin.

Sacrifice minus true faith, repentance, and obedience was hypocrisy (compare Psalm 26:4; Isa. 9:17; Amos 5:21-26).

Leviticus 5:6 "And he shall bring his trespass offering unto the LORD for his sin which he hath sinned, a female from the flock, a lamb or a kid of the goats, for a sin offering; and the priest shall make an atonement for him concerning his sin."

“Trespass offering”:

This special ceremony concerns sins involving dishonesty, theft, deceit, or lying to cover up other sins.

The guilty party, if repentant, can receive forgiveness, but is expected to make restitution.

Christ died for our sins of ignorance, our unintentional sins as well as our intentional sins (6:1-7).

All sin can be forgiven through His sacrifice, but true and sincere repentance should result in restitution.

The very first thing a man or woman should do, then or now when they have sinned, is to confess the sin and ask for forgiveness.

In the case of the Jews, who were under the law, there was a specific offering to be made.

They would come to the tabernacle and place their hands on the head of the offering, confess their sin publicly, and then ask for forgiveness.

He would kill the offering (in this case a female lamb or goat).

Their prayer for forgiveness would be very similar to one we might pray today.

They might say: LORD forgive me, for I have sinned, please accept my prayer and bring me into right standing with God.

You may read more detail in Numbers, on these sins and their offerings (Numbers chapters 5, 6, and 7 go more into detail on this).

In Numbers, you find that this sinner might be male or female.

Leviticus 5:7 "And if he be not able to bring a lamb, then he shall bring for his trespass, which he hath committed, two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, unto the LORD; one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering."

He is not possessed of a lamb, nor able to purchase one.

"Then he shall bring for his trespass which he hath committed, two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, unto the LORD":

Either the one or the other.

These were common, and in great plenty in the land of Israel, as Maimonides observes.

Which was the reason of their being ordered, since they could be gotten cheap.

The turtledoves were larger, as the Targum of Jonathan calls them, being older, and the pigeons lesser, being young.

Or the one were grown, and not little, and the other little, and not grown, as the Jewish writers observe.

And either of them were proper emblems of Christ in his purity, innocence, and meekness, by whom an atonement is made both for the rich and poor.

"One for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering":

One of the turtle doves or pigeons, whichever were brought, was offered up as a sin offering, and the other that remained was offered up as a burnt offering.

So that the poor man had two sorts of offerings out of what he brought, when the rich had but one.

And may denote the completeness of his sacrifice, and the full atonement made by it (see note on 1:3-17).

When this speaks of not being able, it means they are poor.

A sin offering is not a freewill offering.

It is a required offering for sin.

They must bring something, even if it is a fowl.

The sins in the previous verses are very different, but all are sin and must be atoned for.

To keep company with a robber, or even worse, makes you a robber by witness.

To casually swear to something could be avoided by not speaking rashly.

To be in close association with killing diseases could make you very sick.

You can easily see from this that, all of these particular warnings that are given to mankind are for his own benefit.

Leviticus 5:8 "And he shall bring them unto the priest, who shall offer [that] which [is] for the sin offering first, and wring off his head from his neck, but shall not divide [it] asunder:"

Either two turtledoves, or two young pigeons.

"Who shall offer that which is for the sin offering first":

That which is chosen for it, as the Targum of Jonathan.

And this choice was made, not by the priest, but by the man that brought the offering.

Who separated it, and said, lo, this is a sin offering, and after that said, lo, this is a burnt offering.

The sin offering was offered first, which was to make atonement for sin.

And then the burnt offering, to denote the divine acceptance of it.

And so, Ben Gersom observes, it was proper to offer the sin offering first, to atone for his sin, that after he (God), was appeased this way, he might receive his gift.

For the burnt offering was as a gift.

Jarchi compares it to an advocate, who first goes in to appease, and when he has appeased, the gift goes in after him.

"And wring off his head from his neck, but shall not divide it asunder":

Be it a turtledove or a young pigeon, so it was to be served.

The head was not to be separated from the body, but was nipped by the nail of the priest "in" the neck, as it might be rendered.

Over against the neck, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan render it.

The hinder part, or what is behind the throat, as Jarchi and Ben Molech interpret it.

So that the part which was nipped was the neck.

And this nip was made so large, as that the blood was let out by it, as appears from the following verse (Lev. 5:9).

And yet the head was not divided from the body.

The head hung by a piece of skin on the back part.

Of the manner of performing this, and the mystery of it (see notes on Lev. 1:15).

We went into this in detail in a previous lesson, but I will say again here, that this shadows Jesus Christ our Savior.

Jesus had no broken bones.

This fowl will be offered with its wings open wide on the wood, with no bones broken.

Leviticus 5:9 "And he shall sprinkle of the blood of the sin offering upon the side of the altar; and the rest of the blood shall be wrung out at the bottom of the altar: it [is] a sin offering."

Or "wall".

It is asked, "what is the wall at which the rest of the blood is wrung out?"

This is the lower wall, namely, the half of the height of the altar below, under the thread (of scarlet that goes round the middle of the altar).

That the rest of the blood may be squeezed at the bottom of the altar, and because of this the sin offering of the fowl is below, "that is, the sprinkling of its blood.

And so Ben Gersom observes; from hence we learn, says he, that the sprinkling of the sin offering of the fowl was in the lower part of the altar.

And I think this sprinkling, adds he, was not in the length, but in the breadth.

"And the rest of the blood shall be wrung out at the bottom of the altar":

The blood sprinkled was that which dropped from it when nipped by the priest.

This here was squeezed out by him, and was shed at the foot of the altar.

So that the altar had all the blood, and nothing but the blood of the fowl, all the rest belonged to the priest.

This might be an emblem both of the drops of blood which fell from Christ in the garden, and of the shedding of his blood upon the cross, whereby remission of sin was obtained, and atonement made.

"It is a sin offering":

An offering whereby sin was typically expiated and stoned.

We see the symbolism of the blood He shed for all who are on the earth, by the blood being wrung out at the foot of the altar.

The earth swallowing up the blood, shows that Jesus died for whosoever will in all the earth.

Leviticus 5:10 "And he shall offer the second [for] a burnt offering, according to the manner: and the priest shall make an atonement for him for his sin which he hath sinned, and it shall be forgiven him."

That is, the second turtledove or young pigeon, after the other was made a sin offering.

And the manner according to which this was offered was not according to the rite or manner of the bird chosen first for a sin offering, as the Targum of Jonathan.

But according to the burnt offering of the fowl in (Lev. 1:15), so Jarchi and Ben Gersom.

"And the priest shall make an atonement for him, for his sin which he had sinned, and it shall be forgiven him":

Upon the atonement made; and so forgiveness of sin with God proceeds upon the atonement made by the blood of Christ (Heb. 9:22).

God never took one step towards it, without a regard to Christ the propitiation for sin.

He promised it with a view to him.

There is no instance of pardon under the Old Testament but in this way.

And God always has respect to Christ in pardon, it is for his sake.

And this way of forgiveness best provides for the glory of the divine perfections.

There can be no better way, or infinite wisdom would have used it.

There could be no other way, considering the council and covenant of peace.

To pardon, without atonement and satisfaction, is not consistent with the purity, justice, and veracity of God.

And to observe this great truth, the phrase is afterwards frequently repeated.

The word atonement in the Scripture above, I would remind you means to cover or cancel.

The blood of an animal can only cover the sin.

The blood of Jesus Christ cancels sin out.

In the case of this sinner, he or she will have to come back every time they sin, but the Christian is forgiven for all his sins at once.

Jesus sacrificed once for us that we might be made whole by His righteousness.

Leviticus Chapter 5 Questions

1. In Leviticus 5:1, if a person heard someone swearing and did not report it, who was guilty?
2. What type sin would this be classified as?
3. In our day, if a person is with another person who commits a crime and does not report it to the authorities, what crime is the witness guilty of?
4. What are the unclean things listed in verse 2?
5. What is a carcase?
6. What was, possibly, the reason that God said not to touch dead animals?
7. The instructions for touching a man or woman, was not just about touching a dead body, but also what?
8. What are some of the ways diseases are caught today?
9. God does not want us to live in fear, but to practice _____.
10. Who cautioned us not to swear?
11. Who made an oath, and then greatly regretted it in the Bible?
12. What was the awful consequence of his oath?
13. Why did he not take back the oath?

14. Where do we find the Scriptures that tell us not to swear at all?
15. What is the first thing he must do, if he realizes he has sinned?
16. For the sin offering here, is it permissible for the offering to be a female?
17. How were they to confess their sins?
18. If they were to pray, what would be the first thing they would admit to God?
19. Where can you find more detailed information on this sin offering?
20. What is the only reason the person would be allowed to bring a lesser offering?
21. From verse 7, what could be substituted for the offering?
22. A sin offering is not a _____.
23. Who must the sinner bring this offering to, in verse 8?
24. How will this fowl be offered?
25. What 2 things will the priest do with the blood?
26. What 2 things does the word atonement mean?
27. It shall be _____ him.