

Hebrews 5:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.

Analysis

The Aaronic high priest 'must offer sacrifices for his own sins.' This necessity ('opheilei' - is obligated) reveals human priesthood's fundamental limitation. No fallen priest can perfectly mediate between God and man. Christ's sinlessness eliminates this need, making His sacrifice sufficient. Reformed substitutionary atonement requires a sinless substitute - Christ could die for others' sins precisely because He had no sin of His own requiring payment.

Historical Context

On the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16), the high priest first sacrificed for his own sins before offering for the people's. This annual reminder of priestly inadequacy pointed to the need for a better priest.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does the inadequacy of human mediators highlight Christ's sufficiency?

2. What does the priest's need for atonement teach about universal human sinfulness?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	διὰ	ταύτην	όφείλει	καθὼς	περὶ	τοῦ	λαοῦ
And	by reason	hereof	he ought	as	for	G3588	the people
G2532	G1223	G5026	G3784	G2531	G4012		G2992
οὕτως	καὶ	περὶ	έαυτοῦ	προσφέρειν	ὑπὲρ	ἀμαρτιῶν	
so	And	for	himself	to offer	for	sins	
G3779	G2532	G4012	G1438	G4374	G5228	G266	

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 9:7 (Parallel theme): But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people:

Leviticus 9:7 (Sin): And Moses said unto Aaron, Go unto the altar, and offer thy sin offering, and thy burnt offering, and make an atonement for thyself, and for the people: and offer the offering of the people, and make an atonement for them; as the LORD commanded.

Hebrews 7:27 (Sin): Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.

Leviticus 16:6 (Sin): And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make an atonement for himself, and for his house.

Leviticus 16:15 (Sin): Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the vail, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat: