

Leviticus 12:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And if she be not able to bring a lamb, then she shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons; the one for the burnt offering, and the other for a sin offering: and the priest shall make an atonement for her, and she shall be clean.

Analysis

And if she be not able to bring a lamb, then she shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons; the one for the burnt offering, and the other for a sin offering: and the priest shall make an atonement for her, and she shall be clean.

This verse falls within the section on **Purification After Childbirth**. Regulations for ritual purification following childbirth, acknowledging both the blessing of life and effects of the fall.

The Hebrew word *kaphar* (כִּפּר) means 'to cover' or 'to make atonement.' The sacrificial system provided temporary covering for sin, pointing forward to Christ's perfect, once-for-all sacrifice. The Aaronic priesthood mediated between God and Israel, offering sacrifices and maintaining the tabernacle. This prefigured Christ's superior priesthood after the order of Melchizedek. The five main offerings (burnt, grain, peace, sin, and guilt) addressed different aspects of relationship with God, all fulfilled in Christ's comprehensive sacrifice. Ritual purity laws taught Israel to distinguish between clean and unclean, holy and common, training them in discernment and reverence for God's presence.

Every sacrifice and ritual in Leviticus points forward to Jesus Christ, who fulfills the entire sacrificial system as both perfect sacrifice and eternal high priest.

Historical Context

Regulations for ritual purification following childbirth, acknowledging both the blessing of life and effects of the fall. Chapters 11-15 address ritual purity, teaching Israel to distinguish clean from unclean. These laws served multiple purposes: promoting health, teaching spiritual lessons about sin's defilement, and separating Israel from pagan practices. Archaeological evidence shows Canaanite worship involved practices Israel's laws explicitly prohibited. Israel received these laws while encamped at Sinai, before entering Canaan. The laws prepared them for life in the promised land, distinguishing them from Canaanite practices and establishing their identity as God's holy nation. The portable tabernacle, central to Levitical worship, accompanied them through wilderness wanderings and eventually found permanent form in Solomon's temple. The tabernacle's design parallels ancient Near Eastern temple architecture, yet its portable nature and absence of divine images distinguished it from pagan temples.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. In what ways does this verse deepen your appreciation for Christ's atoning sacrifice and the seriousness of sin?
2. How does Christ's superior priesthood, prefigured in this verse, assure you of access to God and effective intercession?
3. What does this verse teach about the costliness of true worship and dedication to God?

Interlinear Text

אִם

H518

אֵל

H3808

תִּמְצֵא

אֵל

And if she be not able to bring

H4672

דָּם

H3027

יְדָה

H1767

שָׂה

H7716

a lamb

וְלֹקֶת

הַשְׁנִי

then she shall bring

H3947

אֲוֹת

two

תֶּרֶן

turtles

H176

שְׁנִי

two

בָּנִי

or two young

יְנִינָה

pigeons

H8147

H8449

H8147

H1121

H3123

וְאֶחָד

and the other

לְעֵל

for the burnt offering

H259

H5930

וְאֶחָד

and the other

H259

לְחַטָּאת

for a sin offering

H2403

וְכַפֵּר

shall make an atonement

H3722

עֵל יְה

H5921

פְּכַח

and the priest

H3548

וְטָהָרָה

for her and she shall be clean

H2891

Additional Cross-References

Leviticus 5:7 (Sin): 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.

Leviticus 4:26 (Sin): And he shall burn all his fat upon the altar, as the fat of the sacrifice of peace offerings: and the priest shall make an atonement for him as concerning his sin, and it shall be forgiven him.

Leviticus 14:22 (Sin): And two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, such as he is able to get; and the one shall be a sin offering, and the other a burnt offering.

Leviticus 1:14 (Sacrifice): And if the burnt sacrifice for his offering to the LORD be of fowls, then he shall bring his offering of turtledoves, or of young pigeons.