

Leviticus 14:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then shall the priest command to take for him that is to be cleansed two birds alive and clean, and cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop:

Analysis

Then shall the priest command to take for him that is to be cleansed two birds alive and clean, and cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop:

This verse falls within the section on **Cleansing from Skin Diseases**. Elaborate cleansing ritual for healed lepers, involving birds, blood, and multiple offerings, symbolizing restoration.

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. Ritual purity laws taught Israel to distinguish between clean and unclean, holy and common, training them in discernment and reverence for God's presence.

The New Testament reveals that Christ's sacrifice accomplishes what the Levitical system could only symbolize—complete forgiveness and restoration of relationship with God.

Historical Context

Elaborate cleansing ritual for healed lepers, involving birds, blood, and multiple offerings, symbolizing restoration. 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. Ancient sacrificial texts from cultures surrounding Israel demonstrate the widespread practice of animal sacrifice, but Israel's system uniquely emphasized moral atonement over magical efficacy.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does Christ's superior priesthood, prefigured in this verse, assure you of access to God and effective intercession?
2. How can you develop greater spiritual discernment in distinguishing what honors God from what defiles?
3. How does understanding the purpose behind God's laws help you obey Him from the heart rather than mere duty?

Interlinear Text

שְׁתִּי	לְמַטָּה ר	וְلֹקֶת ח	בְּפֶה	אַצְוָה
two	for him that is to be cleansed	to take	Then shall the priest	command
H8147	H2891	H3947	H3548	H6680

תּוֹלֵעַת	וְשָׁנָה	אַרְזָה	וְעֵץ	טְהָרָה וְתָמִימָה וְתָמִימָה	צְפָרִים	birds
H8438	H8144	H730	H6086	H2889	H2416	H6833

וְאֶזְבֵּחַ
and hyssop

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 19:6 (Parallel theme): And the priest shall take cedar wood, and hyssop, and scarlet, and cast it into the midst of the burning of the heifer.

Leviticus 14:6 (Parallel theme): As for the living bird, he shall take it, and the cedar wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop, and shall dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water:

Hebrews 9:19 (Parallel theme): For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people,

Psalms 51:7 (Parallel theme): Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Exodus 12:22 (Parallel theme): And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the bason, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the bason; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning.