

Leviticus 14:53

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But he shall let go the living bird out of the city into the open fields, and make an atonement for the house: and it shall be clean.

Analysis

But he shall let go the living bird out of the city into the open fields, and make an atonement for the house: and it shall be clean.

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 Hebrew word *kaphar* (כַּפֵּר) 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. 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 holiness demanded in Leviticus becomes possible through Christ, who both satisfies God's righteous requirements and transforms believers by His Spirit.

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 texts like the Code of Hammurabi show that law codes were common in the ancient Near East, but biblical law uniquely grounded ethics in God's character rather than merely social convention.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. In what ways does this verse deepen your appreciation for Christ's atoning sacrifice and the seriousness of sin?
2. How can you develop greater spiritual discernment in distinguishing what honors God from what defiles?
3. In what ways does this verse challenge contemporary cultural values or your personal attitudes?

Interlinear Text

אֶל	לְעֵיר	מִחְצֵץ	אֶל	בְּתִי הַ	בְּצָבֵר אֶת	וַיָּשֶׁלֶח	ח
But he shall let go	H853	bird	H6833	the living	H413	out	of the city
	H7971			H2416		H2351	H413
into the open	H6440	fields	H7704	and make an atonement	H3722	for the house	H1004
					H5921		
וְתִבְרַר :							
and it shall be clean	H2891						

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