

Leviticus 4:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

If the priest that is anointed do sin according to the sin of the people; then let him bring for his sin, which he hath sinned, a young bullock without blemish unto the LORD for a sin offering.

Analysis

If the priest that is anointed do sin according to the sin of the people; then let him bring for his sin, which he hath sinned, a young bullock without blemish unto the LORD for a sin offering.

This verse falls within the section on **Sin Offerings**. The sin offering (חַטָּאת, chattat) provided atonement for unintentional sins, addressing the defilement sin causes in God's holy presence.

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.

The access to God's presence that Leviticus carefully regulated is now freely available through Christ's blood, tearing the veil and opening the way to God.

Historical Context

The sin offering (חַטָּאת, chattat) provided atonement for unintentional sins, addressing the defilement sin causes in God's holy presence. Leviticus was given

to Israel at Mount Sinai, shortly after the tabernacle's construction described in Exodus. The name 'Leviticus' (from Latin Leviticus, referring to the Levites) reflects its focus on priestly duties, though the Hebrew title Wayyiqra ('And He called') emphasizes God's initiative in revealing these laws. The first seven chapters detail the five main offerings, providing both worshiper instructions and priestly procedures. Ancient Near Eastern cultures had various sacrificial systems, but Israel's sacrificial worship was unique in its ethical foundation, monotheistic framework, and emphasis on atonement rather than appeasement. Unlike pagan rituals focused on manipulating deities, Israel's sacrifices acknowledged God's sovereignty and sought reconciliation based on His gracious provision. 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 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

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

הָעָם	לְאַשְׁמֹת	חַטָּא	הַמָּשִׁיחַ	הַכֹּהֵן	אֵם
H5971	H819	H2398	H4899	H3548	H518
of the people	according to the sin	do sin	that is anointed	If the priest	
בֶּן	פָּר	חַטָּא	אֶשֶׁר	לְחַטָּאת:	עַל
H1121	H6499	H2398	H834	H2403	H5921
bullock	do sin	for a sin offering	then let him bring		
לְחַטָּאת:	לִיהוָה	תָּמִים	בֶּקֶר	ר	
H2403	H3068	H8549	H1241		
for a sin offering	unto the LORD	without blemish	a young		

Additional Cross-References

2 Corinthians 5:21 (Sin): For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Leviticus 4:14 (Sin): When the sin, which they have sinned against it, is known, then the congregation shall offer a young bullock for the sin, and bring him before the tabernacle of the congregation.

Leviticus 9:2 (Sin): And he said unto Aaron, Take thee a young calf for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering, without blemish, and offer them before the LORD.

Hebrews 5:3 (Sin): And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.

Ezra 8:35 (Sin): Also the children of those that had been carried away, which were come out of the captivity, offered burnt offerings unto the God of Israel, twelve bullocks for all Israel, ninety and six rams, seventy and seven lambs, twelve he goats for a sin offering: all this was a burnt offering unto the LORD.