

Leviticus 5:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the priest shall make an atonement for him as touching his sin that he hath sinned in one of these, and it shall be forgiven him: and the remnant shall be the priest's, as a meat offering.

Analysis

And the priest shall make an atonement for him as touching his sin that he hath sinned in one of these, and it shall be forgiven him: and the remnant shall be the priest's, as a meat offering.

This verse falls within the section on **Guilt Offerings**. The guilt offering (אֲשָׁם, ashām) addressed specific trespasses requiring both sacrifice and restitution, emphasizing sin's relational damage.

The Hebrew word kaphar (כָּפַר) 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.

Hebrews 9-10 explains how Christ's once-for-all sacrifice supersedes the repeated Levitical offerings, providing permanent cleansing from sin.

Historical Context

The guilt offering (אֲשָׁם, *asham*) addressed specific trespasses requiring both sacrifice and restitution, emphasizing sin's relational damage. 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 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

James 2:17 — Faith and works

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

וְכָפַר	עַל יוֹ	לַכֹּהֵן	עַל	חַטָּאת וְ
shall make an atonement	H5921	And the priest	H5921	for him as touching his sin
H3722		H3548		H2403
אֲשֶׁר	חָטָא	מֵאֵחַד	מֵאֵלֶּה	וְנִסְלַח
H834	that he hath sinned	in one	H428	of these and it shall be forgiven
	H2398	H259		H5545
וְלֹ	וְהִיָּתָה	לַכֹּהֵן	כַּמִּנְחָה:	
H0	H1961	And the priest	as a meat offering	
		H3548	H4503	

Additional Cross-References

Leviticus 2:3 (Sacrifice): And the remnant of the meat offering shall be Aaron's and his sons': it is a thing most holy of the offerings of the LORD made by fire.

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.