

Leviticus 5:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Or if a soul touch any unclean thing, whether it be a carcase of an unclean beast, or a carcase of unclean cattle, or the carcase of unclean creeping things, and if it be hidden from him; he also shall be unclean, and guilty.

Analysis

Or if a soul touch any unclean thing, whether it be a carcase of an unclean beast, or a carcase of unclean cattle, or the carcase of unclean creeping things, and if it be hidden from him; he also shall be unclean, and guilty.

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

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 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 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

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How can you develop greater spiritual discernment in distinguishing what honors God from what defiles?
2. In what ways does this verse challenge contemporary cultural values or your personal attitudes?
3. How does this verse reveal God's character, and how should that revelation shape your relationship with Him?

Interlinear Text

אִו	וְנִפְשׁ	אֲשֶׁר	תִּגַּע	בְּכֹל	דָּבָר	טִמְא	אִו
H176	Or if a soul H5315	H834	touch H5060	H3605	thing H1697	any unclean H2931	H176
טִמְא	אִו	טִמְא	חַיָּה	בְּנִבְלָה	בְּהֵמָה	טִמְא	אִו
H2931	H176	any unclean H2931	beast H2416	or a carcass H5038	cattle H929	any unclean H2931	H2931
מִמֶּנּוּ	וְנִסְתָּר	טִמְא	שְׂרָץ	בְּנִבְלָה	אִו		
H4480	H5956	H2931	creeping things H8318	or a carcass H5038	H176		
וְאָשָׁם:	טִמְא	וְהָיָה					
H816	any unclean H2931	H1931					

Additional Cross-References

Leviticus 5:17 (Parallel theme): And if a soul sin, and commit any of these things which are forbidden to be done by the commandments of the LORD; though he wist it not, yet is he guilty, and shall bear his iniquity.

Deuteronomy 14:8 (Parallel theme): And the swine, because it divideth the hoof, yet cheweth not the cud, it is unclean unto you: ye shall not eat of their flesh, nor touch their dead carcass.

Leviticus 11:11 (Parallel theme): They shall be even an abomination unto you; ye shall not eat of their flesh, but ye shall have their carcasses in abomination.

Haggai 2:13 (Parallel theme): Then said Haggai, If one that is unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean.