

# Numbers 15:25

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the priest shall make an atonement for all the congregation of the children of Israel, and it shall be forgiven them; for it is ignorance: and they shall bring their offering, a sacrifice made by fire unto the LORD, and their sin offering before the LORD, for their ignorance:

## Analysis

**And the priest shall make an atonement for all the congregation**—the verb "make atonement" (kipper, כִּפֶּר) literally means "to cover" or "to wipe away." The priest's mediatorial action covered the congregation's sin, restoring right relationship with God. The assured result—**and it shall be forgiven them**—demonstrates that God graciously accepted the prescribed atonement. The reason given—**for it is ignorance**—shows God distinguished between inadvertent and willful transgression.

The required offerings—**a sacrifice made by fire unto the LORD, and their sin offering before the LORD, for their ignorance**—combined fire offerings (isheh, אִשֶּׁה, offerings consumed by fire) with the chattat (sin offering). The repetition of "unto the LORD" and "before the LORD" emphasizes these offerings' God-ward direction. The priest represented the people before God, and represented God to the people—mediating reconciliation. This typologically points to Christ our great High Priest who "ever liveth to make intercession" (Hebrews 7:25).

## Historical Context

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The Aaronic priesthood functioned from Sinai (approximately 1445 BC) through the first temple period (586 BC), resumed after the exile, and continued until AD 70 when Rome destroyed Herod's temple. After AD 70, Judaism had to reconceptualize atonement without temple or priesthood, leading to emphasis on prayer, repentance, and good works. Christianity understood Christ's death as the ultimate fulfillment rendering the levitical system obsolete (Hebrews 8-10). The Dead Sea Scrolls show Second Temple Jews deeply concerned with proper atonement rituals.

## Related Passages

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**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

## Study Questions

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1. How does the priest's mediatorial role illuminate Christ's superior high priesthood?
2. What does God's provision of atonement for inadvertent sin reveal about His character?
3. How should the assurance "it shall be forgiven" shape your confidence in Christ's atonement?

## Interlinear Text

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וְכַפֵּר	וְהַכֹּהֵן	עַל	כָּל	עַד ת	
shall make an atonement	And the priest	H5921	H3605	for all the congregation	
H3722	H3548			H5712	
בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל	וְנִסְלַח	לָהֶם	כִּי		
of the children	of Israel	and it shall be forgiven	H0	H3588	
H1121	H3478	H5545			
שִׁגְגָתָם:	וְהָיָה	וְהֵבִיאוּ	אֶת	קִרְבָּנָם	
for their ignorance	H1931	H1992	H853	their offering	
H7684		H935		H7133	
אֵשׁ ה	יְהוָה	וְחַטָּאתָם	לִפְנֵי	יְהוָה	עַל
a sacrifice made by fire	the LORD	and their sin offering	before	the LORD	H5921
H801	H3068	H2403	H6440	H3068	
שִׁגְגָתָם:					
for their ignorance					
H7684					

## Additional Cross-References

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**Leviticus 4:20** (Sin): And he shall do with the bullock as he did with the bullock for a sin offering, so shall he do with this: and the priest shall make an atonement for them, and it shall be forgiven them.

**Hebrews 2:17** (Creation): Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

**Romans 3:25** (Sin): Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;