

Numbers 15:27

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And if any soul sin through ignorance, then he shall bring a she goat of the first year for a sin offering.

Analysis

And if any soul sin through ignorance—shifting from corporate sin (v. 24-26) to individual transgression, this verse prescribes atonement for personal inadvertent sin. The Hebrew *nefesh achat* (נְפָשָׁת, "one soul") emphasizes individual responsibility alongside corporate accountability. The prescribed offering—**a she goat of the first year for a sin offering**—differs from the corporate offering's bullock, scaled to individual capacity rather than national resources.

The *chattat* (חֲטֹאת, sin offering) for individual inadvertent sin used a female goat, contrasting with the male goat for corporate sin and the more expensive bull for priestly or entire-community sin (Leviticus 4). This proportional system meant both rich and poor could obtain atonement—God didn't price forgiveness beyond reach. Leviticus 5:7-13 further reduces requirements for the destitute (two turtledoves, or even grain). This accessibility previews the gospel's free offer: "whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17).

Historical Context

Individual sin offerings were frequent in Israelite worship, as people regularly discovered inadvertent violations of purity or ceremonial laws. The detailed regulations in Leviticus 4-5 categorized sins by severity and prescribed appropriate sacrifices. Archaeological evidence from Israelite settlements shows extensive animal husbandry, making livestock available for sacrifices. The economic burden of repeated sin offerings would have created longing for a better

system, fulfilled in Christ's once-for-all sacrifice. Hebrews 10:1-4 emphasizes that repeated annual sacrifices demonstrated their inadequacy—they covered sin temporarily but couldn't perfect the conscience.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does the scaled system of sin offerings (bull/goat/bird/grain) demonstrate God's justice and mercy?
2. What does the frequency of required sin offerings teach about human sinfulness?
3. How does this passage increase your appreciation for Christ's singular, sufficient atonement?

Interlinear Text

וְיִבְרֹא יְהֹוָה בְּשֶׁגֶג הַנְּפָשָׁת אֲלֵיכֶם אִם נִפְשַׁת	if he shall bring through ignorance then he shall bring	H7126 H7684 H2398 H259 H5315 H518
לְמִטְעָת שְׁנַת הַבָּתְּרִית עַל כָּל	for a sin offering of the first year a she goat	H2403 H8141 H1323 H5795

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