

**April 11**

**Scriptures:** Read Leviticus 5 & 6

**Key Verse:** “And it shall be, when he is guilty in any of matters, that he shall confess that he has sinned in that thing”. (Leviticus 5:5)

## **Overview**

We are told in chapter five of specific instances when the sin offering was required. In the old covenant period, a faithful and true witness was very important, since their justice depended upon it and they had no signed contracts as we do today; it was considered a sin if the witness did not testify to the truth (5:1). Another guilty verdict was pronounced upon the one who became ceremonially unclean; even if it happened unknowingly, a sin offering was still required (5:2-3). Lack of separation from the “unclean” things of the world can likewise defile a believer today. It is a great spiritual challenge and a part of “pure and undefiled religion before God... “to keep oneself unspotted from the world” (James 1:27). When we find we have become tainted with worldly things, we also must ask forgiveness and seek atonement.

A third instance we read here that required a sin offering was when a rash and thoughtless oath was sworn. What is demanded here is self-control. The Apostle James gave a warning about the powerful instrument of the tongue (James 3:5-6) and the book of Proverbs is full of wise saying about it (Prov. 10:19; 13:3; 15:4; 21:23). It is clearly taught in the Bible that we must watch our words and let all we say be glorifying to the Lord.

Provision was made for all people to approach God with their sin offering. Nobody was excluded; the very poor Israelites who could not afford two birds were still able to bring fine flour, and with their hearts right before God, atonement would be made for their sin. Today we see that no one is excluded from the salvation available through the sacrifice of Jesus.

We learn that, before the sin offering was effectual, it had to be accompanied by the offerer's confession to God of the particular sin; if this was not done, there could be no atonement. This principle of confession for atonement is consistent with the New Covenant teaching as well: “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us” (1 John 1:9). No oil or incense was to be used with the sin offering, for these ingredients represented joy and the one asking forgiveness should be sorrowful for the sin. However, the sorrow disappears when God's forgiveness is received.

The sin offering and the trespass or guilt offering are very similar. The difference is that the trespass offering was brought when restitution was required (5:16; 6:4, 5), like repaying a neighbor for some harm done (6:1-7). Trespassing against the Lord in regard to the holy things (5:14-19) probably means that the offender failed to give to God His rightful tithes, offerings, first fruits, or ransom money (Es. 30:11-16). The restitution was to pay back what was originally owed, along with an additional 20 percent, and the offering of an unblemished ram. Such transgressions required that atonement be made; then the Lord promised to forgive (5:18). No doubt there are many who claim to follow Christ today, yet fail to give God His share. Forgiveness must be sought by such person.

Finally, directions are given concerning the priest's own use of the burnt, grain, and sin offerings. Respecting God's commands in all areas of service to Him is necessary, for the true meaning of the sacrifice could be lost if the various rituals were not properly observed. Great care was to be taken of the priest's clothing, disposing of the ashes and, very importantly, the fire on the altar was to burn continually. The priest, as the people's representative to God, was to ensure that there were always uninterrupted appeals going up to the Lord on behalf of both the priesthood and the whole assembly of Israel. The priests and the high priest were not exempt from offering sacrifices to the Lord on their own behalf. They, probably more than any of the common people because of their responsibility, were to confess their sins, keep pure, give offerings, and remain in constant fellowship with God. However, because our great High Priest, Jesus Christ, was perfect and sinless, atonement through Him is much more effective (Heb. 7:25-26).

## **Prayer**

Lord God, thank You that a continual sacrifice, Your Lamb, is there at the altar in Heaven and that His intercession continually is before You. (Heb. 7:25)