

Leviticus 4:1 ¶ **And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Leviticus 4:2 Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a soul shall sin through ignorance against any of the commandments of the LORD concerning things which ought not to be done, and shall do against any of them:**

“ignorance” = a mistake or inadvertent transgression:—error, ignorance, at unawares; unwittingly.

The wording that opens this chapter is confusing, but after reading through the rest of the chapter, I think the NIV translation states it better: “*When anyone sins unintentionally and does what is forbidden in any of the LORD’s commands....*” These two verses serve as an introduction for a whole section of offerings dealing with sins of ignorance.

It is important to note that when we sin—no matter whether deliberate or unintentional—we are accountable to God for that sin. Ignorance is not an acceptable excuse.

Leviticus 4:3 If the priest that is anointed do sin according to the sin of the people; then let him bring for his sin, which he hath sinned, a young bullock without blemish unto the LORD for a sin offering.

Leviticus 4:4 And he shall bring the bullock unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD; and shall lay his hand upon the bullock’s head, and kill the bullock before the LORD.

Leviticus 4:5 And the priest that is anointed shall take of the bullock’s blood, and bring it to the tabernacle of the congregation:

Leviticus 4:6 And the priest shall dip his finger in the blood, and sprinkle of the blood seven times before the LORD, before the vail of the sanctuary.

Leviticus 4:7 And the priest shall put *some* of the blood upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the LORD, which *is* in the tabernacle of the congregation; and shall pour all the blood of the bullock at the bottom of the altar of the burnt offering, which *is at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

Leviticus 4:8 And he shall take off from it all the fat of the bullock for the sin offering; the fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that *is* upon the inwards,

Leviticus 4:9 And the two kidneys, and the fat that *is* upon them, which *is* by the flanks, and the caul above the liver, with the kidneys, it shall he take away,

Leviticus 4:10 As it was taken off from the bullock of the sacrifice of peace offerings: and the priest shall burn them upon the altar of the burnt offering.

Leviticus 4:11 And the skin of the bullock, and all his flesh, with his head, and with his legs, and his inwards, and his dung,

Leviticus 4:12 Even the whole bullock shall he carry forth without the camp unto a clean place, where the ashes are poured out, and burn him on the wood with fire: where the ashes are poured out shall he be burnt.

Human priests are just as subject to sin as anyone else, but I think it is important to note that the context is regarding unintentional sin. It was not to be expected that a priest would deliberately act rebelliously against the LORD. As

representatives of the people before God, their sin brought consequences to the entire nation. I think this is a truth that many in the upper echelons of Christian leadership tend to belittle. Scripture often compares the people of God to sheep—an animal not known for wisdom. Sheep thrive under the guidance of a shepherd; if a shepherd is not diligent to do the right things, the sheep are endangered.

If a priest finds himself in sin, he is to offer a sin offering for himself just as he would for the people. He is to bring a young bull to the door of the tabernacle, lay his hand on its head to identify with it, and kill it. It seems that a priest is not given a choice; he must sacrifice a young bull without blemish.

At this point the instructions differ from a sin offering for others in the congregation. He is to take the blood from the slain bull into the tabernacle and dip his finger into the blood and sprinkle it seven times in front of the veil of entry to the Holy of holies. He is then to put some of the blood on the horn of the altar of incense. The rest of the blood is to be poured out at bottom of the altar for burnt offerings at the door outside the tabernacle. The priest is to then take all the fat from inside the bull as instructed for the peace offering in the previous chapter and burn it all on the altar. All the rest of the animal—its skin, head, legs, inwards, and dung—are to be taken outside the camp to a place that has been ceremonially cleansed to collect the ashes from the burnt offerings. It is there that he is to burn all the rest of the animal on wood on the ash pile.

The priest is serving as God's appointed spiritual authority over the people. The spiritual authority over the priest is God. In recognition of this truth, the priest was required to sprinkle the blood before the place appointed as representing God's presence among the people, the Holy of holies. He is in effect picturing dying to self once again and yielding his life to the LORD's use with a prayer to be allowed to continue to serve at God's pleasure—thus the blood on the horn on the altar of incense. By pouring out the rest of the blood at the altar where all other sin sacrifices are made, he is picturing the truth that the ground is level at the foot of the cross.

The peace offering becomes a joint offering to the sin offering for a priest. I think it is meant to signify a heart of gratitude for the answer to prayer signified at the altar of incense. So what does taking the rest of the animal outside the camp to be burned signify? I think it pictures the crucifixion of Jesus, our Great High Priest, outside the walls of Jerusalem—and don't you know that God looked on that ground as cleansed by the shed blood of His Son.

Leviticus 4:13 ¶ **And if the whole congregation of Israel sin through ignorance, and the thing be hid from the eyes of the assembly, and they have done somewhat against any of the commandments of the LORD concerning things which should not be done, and are guilty;**

Leviticus 4:14 **When the sin, which they have sinned against it, is known, then the congregation shall offer a young bullock for the sin, and bring him before the tabernacle of the congregation.**

Leviticus 4:15 And the elders of the congregation shall lay their hands upon the head of the bullock before the LORD: and the bullock shall be killed before the LORD.

God now provides instruction for a sacrifice that addresses sin of ignorance by the whole congregation of Israel. Note that accountability for making the offering is contingent upon being made aware of their sin. As with the priest, only a young bull is acceptable for this sacrifice. I don't think I made the connection previously that the young bull pictures Jesus in His prime at the time of His crucifixion. The bull is to be killed in view of the people and the responsibility of the whole regarding the sin acknowledged by the elders of the congregation placing their hands on the head of the animal. The animal is then killed (by one of the elders?).

Leviticus 4:16 And the priest that is anointed shall bring of the bullock's blood to the tabernacle of the congregation:

Leviticus 4:17 And the priest shall dip his finger *in some* of the blood, and sprinkle *it* seven times before the LORD, *even* before the vail.

Leviticus 4:18 And he shall put *some* of the blood upon the horns of the altar which *is* before the LORD, that *is* in the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall pour out all the blood at the bottom of the altar of the burnt offering, which *is at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

Leviticus 4:19 And he shall take all his fat from him, and burn *it* upon the altar.

Leviticus 4:20 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.

Leviticus 4:21 And he shall carry forth the bullock without the camp, and burn him as he burned the first bullock: *it is* a sin offering for the congregation.

As in the case of the priest that sinned, the priest is to take the blood of the bull into the tabernacle and sprinkle the blood seven times before the veil of entry to the Holy of holies; he is also to put some of the blood on the horns of the altar of incense. The rest of the instructions seem to align directly with those given for the priest in the previous section. The fat is to be burned as a peace offering and the rest of the bull sacrificed by fire outside the camp.

I think the typology is similar. To present the blood outside the veil of God's presence is to acknowledge the LORD's authority; the blood on the altar of incense pictures the prayer for restored fellowship. The peace offering is gratitude for the LORD's answer to prayer. Burning the body of the bull outside the camp again pictures the crucifixion of Jesus outside Jerusalem in order to provide a way for restored fellowship with God for all.

I am reminded that just as with the church, the scripture makes reference to the people of Israel as a nation of priests.

Exodus 19:5-6 "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation."

Leviticus 4:22 ¶ When a ruler hath sinned, and done *somewhat* through ignorance *against* any of the commandments of the LORD his God *concerning things* which should not be done, and is guilty;

Leviticus 4:23 Or if his sin, wherein he hath sinned, come to his knowledge; he shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats, a male without blemish:

Leviticus 4:24 And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the goat, and kill it in the place where they kill the burnt offering before the LORD: it is a sin offering.

Leviticus 4:25 And the priest shall take of the blood of the sin offering with his finger, and put *it* upon the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and shall pour out his blood at the bottom of the altar of burnt offering.

Leviticus 4:26 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.

This section addresses the sin of ignorance on the part of one of the recognized leaders among the people. Note again that accountability for the sacrifice is contingent upon becoming aware of one's sin. The acceptable sacrifice in this instance is to be a male kid of the goats without blemish. I would assume this to picture acknowledgement that their authority is under that of the priest; therefore, a less valuable sacrifice. He is to bring the animal to the altar for burnt offerings because it is a sin offering. He is to lay his hand upon the head of the goat to identify with it and kill it at the altar. The difference in this sin offering is that the priest is to put blood on his finger and put it on the horns of the altar for burnt offerings. I can't come up with an application for this difference at this moment. Instruction is given that the fat of the animal be offered as a peace offering in gratitude for restored fellowship. Point is made that this sacrifice provides atonement for the sin. (See notes from chapter one.)

Leviticus 4:27 ¶ And if any one of the common people sin through ignorance, while he doeth *somewhat against* any of the commandments of the LORD *concerning things* which ought not to be done, and be guilty;

Leviticus 4:28 Or if his sin, which he hath sinned, come to his knowledge: then he shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats, a female without blemish, for his sin which he hath sinned.

Leviticus 4:29 And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin offering, and slay the sin offering in the place of the burnt offering.

Leviticus 4:30 And the priest shall take of the blood thereof with his finger, and put *it* upon the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and shall pour out all the blood thereof at the bottom of the altar.

Leviticus 4:31 And he shall take away all the fat thereof, as the fat is taken away from off the sacrifice of peace offerings; and the priest shall burn *it* upon the altar for a sweet savour unto the LORD; and the priest shall make an atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him.

Finally, we come to instructions for sins of ignorance committed by anyone else among the people. Responsibility to make the sacrifice is again contingent upon being made aware of one's sin. A significant difference is noted in that a female

kid of the goats without blemish is the accepted sacrifice. I would assume this is to picture their acknowledgement of their position of submission to God's established authorities over them—e.g., the woman's position of submission to man. The rest of the instruction seems to mirror that given for the sin of the ruler in the preceding section with the same applications.

Leviticus 4:32 And if he bring a lamb for a sin offering, he shall bring it a female without blemish.

Leviticus 4:33 And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin offering, and slay it for a sin offering in the place where they kill the burnt offering.

Leviticus 4:34 And the priest shall take of the blood of the sin offering with his finger, and put *it* upon the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and shall pour out all the blood thereof at the bottom of the altar:

Leviticus 4:35 And he shall take away all the fat thereof, as the fat of the lamb is taken away from the sacrifice of the peace offerings; and the priest shall burn them upon the altar, according to the offerings made by fire unto the LORD: and the priest shall make an atonement for his sin that he hath committed, and it shall be forgiven him.

This section allows for the option of a female lamb without blemish to be used for this sacrifice. The rest of the instructions and applications seem to mirror those for the preceding two sections.

As I go through this book, I am often going to make summary statements that refer to previous sections already detailed.