

Leviticus 5:1 ¶ And if a soul sin, and hear the voice of swearing, and is a witness, whether he hath seen or known of it; if he do not utter it, then he shall bear his iniquity.

As I read through this chapter, it stood out that it is dealing with both kinds of sin—deliberate and unintentional. Examples of situations are given that illustrate the need for atonement no matter the type of sin.

This verse identifies a deliberate sin. God certainly wants us to understand that righteous judgment should be important to us; therefore, to possess information that speaks to the guilt or innocence of someone who is on trial and not testify before the court is a sin.

I can't help but think how different would be our court system in America today if everyone involved in it were just seeking the truth. Sadly, it has become a venue for publicity as a platform to profit, for judicial activism, and an arena for winning vs. losing rather than guilt vs. innocence.

Leviticus 5:2 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.
Leviticus 5:3 Or if he touch the uncleanness of man, whatsoever uncleanness it be that a man shall be defiled withal, and it be hid from him; when he knoweth of it, then he shall be guilty.

These two verses address unintentional sins pertaining to touching unclean dead animals or making contact with any uncleanness related to man. Specifics to understanding how to discern between what is clean and unclean will be given in subsequent chapters. The point being made is that it is possible to sin in this manner without knowing it. When, however, one becomes aware of his sin, he is accountable to acknowledge his sin and seek forgiveness.

I am reminded that God is very aware of our human weaknesses and our susceptibility to deception. That is one of the reasons that the Lord encourages us to study His word and make it a part of our being. We are encouraged to hide it in our hearts to help keep us from sin. The more the word is a part of us, the more likely it is that we will exercise better discernment and make better choices that will keep us from unintentional sins.

Deuteronomy 6:5–9 “And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.”

Psalms 119:11 “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.”

Leviticus 5:4 Or if a soul swear, pronouncing with *his* lips to do evil, or to do good, whatsoever *it be* that a man shall pronounce with an oath, and it be hid from him; when he knoweth *of it*, then he shall be guilty in one of these.

With this verse the LORD wants to impress upon His people the importance of the words we say. Our words are much more powerful than we realize, and the LORD holds us accountable for thoughtless vows—whether for good or evil—spoken in the passion of the moment. Again, when one becomes aware of his sin, he is accountable to acknowledge his sin and seek forgiveness.

I can certainly look back on my own life and identify times when I made “good” promises to God in an emotional state. Too many times I have had to seek His forgiveness in light of those promises. The desire to want to do the things that honor Him is ever present, but the discipline to be consistent in my actions in light of that desire is a constant struggle.

In view of “bad” vows uttered in the heat of the moment, it is important that we acknowledge our sin and seek forgiveness. Jesus emphasized that sin is rooted in the attitude of our heart. (See Topical Study on Sermon on the Mount.)

Leviticus 5:5 And it shall be, when he shall be guilty in one of these *things*, that he shall confess that he hath sinned in that *thing*:

Leviticus 5:6 And he shall bring his trespass offering unto the LORD for his sin which he hath sinned, a female from the flock, a lamb or a kid of the goats, for a sin offering; and the priest shall make an atonement for him concerning his sin.

Once a person recognizes that he is guilty in any of the ways illustrated above, he is responsible to confess that sin before the LORD. He is to bring a sin offering of a female lamb or kid of the goats to the priest so that he can make atonement for the sin as outlined previously.

Leviticus 5:7 ¶ And if he be not able to bring a lamb, then he shall bring for his trespass, which he hath committed, two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, unto the LORD; one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering.

Leviticus 5:8 And he shall bring them unto the priest, who shall offer *that* which *is* for the sin offering first, and wring off his head from his neck, but shall not divide *it* asunder:

Leviticus 5:9 And he shall sprinkle of the blood of the sin offering upon the side of the altar; and the rest of the blood shall be wrung out at the bottom of the altar: *it is* a sin offering.

Leviticus 5:10 And he shall offer the second *for* a burnt offering, according to the manner: and the priest shall make an atonement for him for his sin which he hath sinned, and it shall be forgiven him.

If unable to bring an offering from the flock, he is to bring two turtledoves or young pigeons—one for a sin offering and one for a burnt offering. The one designated as the sin offering is to be sacrificed first. The head is to be wrung off, but the body left in tact. Blood from the bird is to be sprinkled on the side of the

altar and the rest drained out at the bottom of the altar. The second bird is then to be offered as burnt offering as outlined in chapter one. The first one seems to picture an acknowledgement of one's guilt, and the second the need for forgiveness.

I am reminded of the words of John.

1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Leviticus 5:11 But if he be not able to bring two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, then he that sinned shall bring for his offering the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour for a sin offering; he shall put no oil upon it, neither shall he put *any* frankincense thereon: for it *is* a sin offering.

Leviticus 5:12 Then shall he bring it to the priest, and the priest shall take his handful of it, *even* a memorial thereof, and burn *it* on the altar, according to the offerings made by fire unto the LORD: it *is* a sin offering.

Leviticus 5:13 And the priest shall make an atonement for him as touching his sin that he hath sinned in one of these, and it shall be forgiven him: and *the remnant* shall be the priest's, as a meat offering.

The LORD is sensitive to the needs of every person—no matter how poor they may be in the eyes of this world. If unable to bring turtledoves or pigeons, one may bring a tenth of an ephah of fine flour without oil or frankincense for a sin offering. The priest will take a handful of the flour (representative of the person's sin) and burn it on the altar as a sin offering. The priest is then given the remainder of the flour as a meat offering as detailed in chapter two.

Leviticus 5:14 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Leviticus 5:15 If a soul commit a trespass, and sin through ignorance, in the holy things of the LORD; then he shall bring for his trespass unto the LORD a ram without blemish out of the flocks, with thy estimation by shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for a trespass offering:

Leviticus 5:16 And he shall make amends for the harm that he hath done in the holy thing, and shall add the fifth part thereto, and give it unto the priest: and the priest shall make an atonement for him with the ram of the trespass offering, and it shall be forgiven him.

I think this section should start the next chapter. It seems to be referencing the things associated with the sacrifices made at the temple and one's integrity and respect for others.

At issue in these verses is unintentional sin regarding "the holy things of the LORD." Context requires that one recognizes his sin, and with that recognition he is to seek forgiveness and make restitution. Only a ram, a male sheep, without blemish is acceptable for this trespass offering. The wording is difficult, but it seems that the ram is to serve as a trespass offering and the amount of money determined appropriate by the priest plus 20% given to the priest to make restitution for harm done and loss incurred.

Leviticus 5:17 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.

Leviticus 5:18 And he shall bring a ram without blemish out of the flock, with thy estimation, for a trespass offering, unto the priest: and the priest shall make an atonement for him concerning his ignorance wherein he erred and wist *it* not, and it shall be forgiven him.

Leviticus 5:19 *It is* a trespass offering; he hath certainly trespassed against the LORD.

These verses seem to address unintentional sin in general in light of God's commandments concerning the holy things. Again, ignorance is not excusable. Context would seem to require that the person be made aware of his sin, though no statement is made to that effect. This offering is also to be a ram without blemish and appropriate monetary restitution. It seems that the sin referenced here did not result in "harm," so it did not require restitution plus interest. As always, one who seeks forgiveness through confession and obedience is forgiven.

Emphasis is made on the truth that this sin is "against the LORD."