

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Leviticus 04: 13-21

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the Bible again. We'll continue to read Leviticus chapter 4, and today we'll read from verse 13 to verse 21.

The sin offering is for dealing with sins committed unintentionally, which includes sins that one cannot overcome or sins that one is unaware of. These unintentional sins come from the root of sin. According to Romans 5:19, because of the disobedience of one man, Adam, we all became sinners. Since human life is corrupted, we are born with a sinful nature, and people cannot help but sin. To God, sin has no size, because the wages of sin is death, whether it is a great sin or a small sin, both are ended by death. However, to people, sin does have sizes, because the impact of sin varies in magnitude, and the sin offering is based on the impact of sin, with different methods of offering.

Leviticus chapter 4 begins by dealing with the most impactful sins, starting from verses 3-11, which deal with the sin of the anointed priest. Because the priest sinned, the people are all caught up in sin. The priest is the spiritual leader among the people of Israel; they help the Israelites serve and worship God. Now the priest has sinned, causing the people to fall into sin, which breaks the fellowship between God and the people. This is a very serious matter.

Therefore, the sinning priest must offer a young bull as a sin offering, and the priest must sprinkle the bull's blood before the veil of the sanctuary seven times, and also put some of the blood on the horns of the golden altar of incense, with the rest of the blood poured out at the base of the altar of burnt offering. In this way, through the blood of the sacrificial animal, the way of fellowship between God and people is reopened. This process of dealing with the blood is built upon the foundation of the burnt offering, and therefore it can be accepted by God.

Next, the fat and kidneys of the young bull must be burned on the altar of burnt offerings, just like the peace offering, to restore peace between God and man. On one hand, it is people giving thanks to God; on the other hand, it allows people to come before God and have fellowship with Him. The remaining parts of the young bull must be taken outside the camp to the place where the ashes of the burnt offering are dumped, and they must be burned with fire on the wood. Since this bull bears the sins of the people, and God detests sin, it must be taken outside the camp, away from God, and completely burned to ashes, signifying that sin must be completely removed. The ashes of this sin offering are placed on top of the ashes of the burnt offering, indicating that the result of dealing with sin is also acceptable to God.

When a priest sins and causes the people to fall into sin, the impact is the greatest, which is why the method of offering is the most complex. Today, we are going to study the second type of sin offering, where the situation is also very serious, affecting the entire congregation. However, this time, it is not the priest who has sinned, so the priest can still perform his duties, and the method of offering is slightly different.

Verse 13: “Now if the whole congregation of Israel sins unintentionally, and the thing is hidden from the eyes of the assembly, and they have done something against any of the commandments of the Lord in anything which should not be done, and are guilty.”

Here, it mentions that the things which the Lord commanded should not be done likely refer to the commandments, statutes, and ordinances given by God through Moses, most of which are recorded in Exodus chapters 20-23. Among them are some commandments with general principles that leave some room for interpretation in their application. For example, the Second Commandment, "You shall not make for yourself a carved image"—where is the boundary between dress well and an idol? The Tenth Commandment, "You shall not covet"—in cases where ownership is unclear, at what point does desiring something become coveting? It's

possible that someone may have initially done something that didn't seem to cause any negative consequences, so eventually everyone does it and it becomes common practice, leading to unintentional sin; and this is a hidden sin, one that even the congregation may not recognize.

In fact, such things are still prevalent in the church today. For example, we all know that we should not love the world, yet we still live in the world and are influenced by worldly trends. Sometimes, we unconsciously bring these trends into church life, which negatively impacts the congregation. This is somewhat similar to what this verse is saying—it's something the Lord commanded not to do, yet it was done unintentionally, and it remains hidden, unnoticed by the people.

Verse 14: “When the sin which they have committed becomes known, then the assembly shall offer a young bull for the sin, and bring it before the tabernacle of meeting.”

Here, it says that when the congregation becomes aware of the sin, meaning that the sin has been revealed. In the laws of the world, ignorance often excuses a person from guilt, but in God's house, sin is still sin, even if committed unknowingly. Of course, knowing and willfully committing sin is even worse. Some sins committed unknowingly become very widespread, with many people falling into them. Later, the congregation recognizes this as sin, perhaps through a process of reflection or through much communication and discussion, eventually leading to a unanimous recognition that this has no place in God's house, and it must be dealt with as sin.

At this point, a bull must be brought to the Tabernacle as a sin offering. Although it was not known initially, it affected the entire congregation, making this a serious matter that requires the offering of a bull as a sin offering. This is the same type of sacrifice offered when a priest sins and causes the entire congregation to fall into sin.

Verse 15: “And the elders of the congregation shall lay their hands on the head of the bull before the Lord. Then the bull shall be killed before the Lord.”

The elders of the congregation—this term in the original language is in the plural form, meaning the elders represent the entire people of Israel. God entrusted the responsibility of leading, caring for, and shepherding the congregation to the elders. Now that the whole congregation has sinned, the elders, on behalf of the people, must lay their hands on the bull's head, symbolizing their union with the sacrificial animal. They must then slaughter the bull before the Lord. The death of the bull represents the entire congregation dying together with the sacrificial animal.

Verse 16-18: “The anointed priest shall bring some of the bull’s blood to the tabernacle of meeting. Then the priest shall dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle it seven times before the Lord, in front of the veil. And he shall put some of the blood on the horns of the altar which is before the Lord, which is in the tabernacle of meeting; and he shall pour the remaining blood at the base of the altar of burnt offering, which is at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.”

The anointed priest is to take some of the bull's blood and bring it into the Tent of Meeting. He will then come before the veil that separates the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place, and sprinkle the blood with his finger seven times before the veil. This action symbolizes that the blood satisfies the requirements of God's righteousness, holiness, and glory, giving people the standing to come before God. Afterward, the priest is to go to the golden altar of incense inside the Tent of Meeting and smear some of the blood on the horns of the altar. This signifies the restoration of communion between God and man, allowing people to once again come before God to serve and worship Him.

The remaining blood is to be poured out at the base of the altar of burnt offering, signifying the solid foundation of the redemption accomplished on the cross. At this point, what the priest does is exactly the same as in the previous example. The handling of the blood is crucial because it ensures that on the solid foundation of

the cross, people can restore their fellowship with God and come fully into His presence.

Verse 19: “He shall take all the fat from it and burn it on the altar.”

The fat of the bull must be removed and burned on the altar. This is somewhat different from the sin offering given when the priest sins. In verses 8-10 of this chapter, it is clearly recorded that the fat and kidneys should be removed, and it is explicitly mentioned that this should be done just as in the peace offering, as described in Leviticus 3:3-5. However, in verse 19, only the removal of all the fat is mentioned, without any reference to the kidneys or a comparison to the peace offering. This raises the question: why is only the fat removed and not the kidneys?

We know that the sin offering is intended to restore the communion between God and man. When sin enters, it disrupts this communion. The sprinkling, smearing, and pouring of blood on the altar's base is what opens the way for communion between God and man. If a priest sins, the connection between God and man is completely severed. Therefore, the deepest connection of love, symbolized by the kidneys, must be restored first before bringing out the fullness and beauty of communion, which is symbolized by the fat.

When the entire congregation sins unknowingly, it falls under the responsibility of the elders. Since the priest is still faithfully performing his duties, the deep connection of love between God and man, symbolized by the kidneys, has not been broken and thus does not need to be restored. It is only necessary for the priest to offer the fat to restore the beautiful and complete communion between God and man. This is the only difference.

Verse 20: “And he shall do with the bull as he did with the bull as a sin offering; thus he shall do with it. So the priest shall make atonement for them, and it shall be forgiven them.”

The rest of the process is the same as with the previous sin offering involving the bull; the priest will make atonement for them, and they shall be forgiven. This statement was not mentioned in the sin offering for when a priest sins because, in that case, the priest first had to deal with his own sin, so it was not stated. However, here, since the priest is still able to perform his duties, he must make atonement for the people according to the method revealed by God, and they will be forgiven.

Pay attention to the word "shall" here—God is very clear. When the people have sinned, God has established the ordinance for offering sacrifices, and if people follow it, God will surely forgive them, and they will certainly receive forgiveness. What an assurance this is! This aligns with what is stated in 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." We see that God is certain to forgive our sins.

Verse 21: "Then he shall carry the bull outside the camp, and burn it as he burned the first bull. It is a sin offering for the assembly."

The remaining parts of the bull must be taken outside the camp and burned, just as with the first bull, in the place where the ashes from the altar are dumped. The entire remaining portion of the bull must be placed on the wood and burned until it is reduced to ashes—this is the sin offering for the whole congregation. By this, the sins they committed unknowingly will be removed. Dear brothers and sisters, these two examples show us that when the entire congregation is caught in sin and loses communion with God, it is a very serious matter. To restore communion with the congregation, God requires three steps: sprinkling the blood, applying the blood, and pouring out the blood.

If the priest has sinned, the fat and the kidneys must be burned on the altar according to the peace offering procedure. However, if the congregation has committed sins that were hidden and not apparent, only the fat needs to be burned on the altar. This is because the priest is still present and can assist the congregation in offering sacrifices, meaning the deepest connection between God and the people has not been severed. As for the body of the bull, it must be taken outside the camp

and burned in the place where the ashes from the altar are dumped until it is reduced to ashes. We see that God's provision is truly complete—He has already provided a way for the sins we commit unknowingly to be atoned for. May we all follow God's revealed instructions and offer sin offerings to Him.

Let us pray together: Lord, thank You for reminding us that when the entire church falls into sin, we must deal with the issue of sin very seriously. We not only need to experience the redemption accomplished by Your blood on the cross, which is our eternal foundation; but we also need to move forward and, through the efficacy of Your precious blood, restore our communion with You and our service and worship in the church. Only then can we pass through the veil into the Holy of Holies and enjoy Your perfect presence. We can also, through the peace offering, enjoy a sweet and rich fellowship with You. As for our sins, they have been completely burned to ashes outside the camp on Golgotha, completely forgotten. Lord, thank You for giving us such a great salvation, and help us not to take lightly the collective sin of the church, but to follow Your revealed method to restore our sweet fellowship with You. Bless my church, I pray in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen!