

**Bridging the Divide [Leviticus 4-6]**  
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## INTRODUCTION

1. I've spent my whole life in Cincinnati. I still don't get bored with it.
  - a. My favorite local landmark: John A. Roebling Suspension bridge (started 1856, open 1866)
    - 1) When opened, longest suspension span in the world.
    - 2) Problem: this rivertown needed interstate commerce when water was too low.
    - 3) Problem: bridge needed to be high enough to continue river traffic.
  - b. It completes an essential task: bridging the divide while providing aesthetic beauty.
2. TRANSITION: We continue in our newly started series on Leviticus.
  - a. We're still in a confusing part of the Bible, figuring out these sacrifices.
  - b. Even though we moderns might not get it, there's a blueprint here for God's plan to bridge the divide between God's Holiness and Our Imperfection.
  - c. And more than that, we his people may become **holy community in a secular world.**

## Leviticus 4:1

*The LORD said to Moses, <sup>2</sup> "Say to the Israelites: 'When anyone sins unintentionally and does what is forbidden in any of the LORD's commands—*

1. These verses signify a shift.
  - \*Chapters One through Three dealt with SPONTANEOUS OFFERINGS
  - \*Chapters Four through Six deal with Specific Offenses
  - a. The opening verses could seem frightening if you don't understand the context.
  - b. Usually, we understand what SIN is: it's us doing something harming relationships
    - 1) Many times, sin has its basis in my relationship with other people.
    - 2) Sometimes, my sins are against God.
  - c. Unintentional sin is scary because it takes CONTROL from our sin.
    - 1) HOW FAIR FOR GOD TO HOLD US ACCOUNTABLE something we don't control?
    - 2) Maybe some good news: it wasn't limited to an individual.
    - 3) Provisions in CH4 cover all people: VS13 = community, VS22=leader, VS27=one
2. Bible here transcends many ancient religions in recognizing unintentional sin. TWO TYPES
  - a. ACTIONS WITH CONSEQUENCES THAT UNINTENTIONALLY CREATE SIN
    - Numbers 35:22-24**  
*"But if without enmity someone suddenly pushes another or throws something at them unintentionally or, without seeing them, drops on them a stone heavy enough to kill them, and they die, then since that other person was not an enemy and no harm was intended, the assembly must judge between the accused and the avenger of blood according to these regulations."*
  - b. ACTIONS WHERE THE OFFENDER IS UNAWARE OF HIS SIN
    - 1) As I was thinking this week how I could ever explain this in a modern context, two examples came through in my own life
      - a) Taxes: wife's consulting was peculiar and I entered data on wrong line.
      - b) My Ham AND Bacon sandwich; not kosher
  - c. NOTE: while this explains the TYPE of sin, it doesn't necessarily make us feel better:
  - d. Do I want to serve a God who punishes me for mistaken taxes and eating bacon?
3. Ultimately, it's displays our lack of holiness; our imperfection when compared to God.
  - a. The sacrifices of chapters four and five are called *purification offerings*.
  - b. This lack of purity might be unintentional, but it's still evident
  - c. My quest is one of purity in my conscience before the Lord

### **Leviticus 5:2,3**

<sup>2</sup> "If anyone becomes aware that they are guilty—if they unwittingly touch anything ceremonially unclean (whether the carcass of an unclean animal, wild or domestic, or of any unclean creature that moves along the ground) and they are unaware that they have become unclean, but then they come to realize their guilt; <sup>3</sup> or if they touch human uncleanness (anything that would make them unclean) even though they are unaware of it, but then they learn of it and realize their guilt . . .

1. The conversation of purification continues, this time pulling in things that are unclean
  - a. We'll continue on this concept in more detail later, but there were things that God's people were forbidden to touch
  - b. We'll see later that many of these had health benefits for people, mitigating disease
  - c. It was going to be key in a secular world where people cannibalized at times.
- d. The concern with LAWS that Jesus will confront: when they aren't pragmatic

### **Luke 10:30-32**

"A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side."

- e. THE KEY CONCEPT HERE: unintentional sin (even touching) required purification

### **Leviticus 5:7-11**

<sup>7</sup> "Anyone who cannot afford a lamb is to bring two doves or two young pigeons to the LORD as a penalty for their sin—one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering.<sup>11</sup> "If, however, they cannot afford two doves or two young pigeons, they are to bring as an offering for their sin a tenth of an ephah of the finest flour for a sin offering. They must not put olive oil or incense on it, because it is a sin offering.

1. I love this text because it makes sure that purity is obtainable for all.
  2. Many religions paralleled existing power structures to provide the rich benefits.
    - \*In essence, this is why the British endorsed India's caste system; it kept control.
  3. Here, there is a declining system of sacrifice to ensure worship is limited by income.
- \*NOW WE GO FROM PURIFICATION OFFERINGS TO A NEW KIND

### **Leviticus 5:14,15**

<sup>14</sup>The LORD said to Moses: <sup>15</sup> "When anyone is unfaithful to the LORD by sinning unintentionally in regard to any of the LORD's holy things, they are to bring to the LORD as a penalty a ram from the flock, one without defect and of the proper value in silver, according to the sanctuary shekel. It is a guilt offering.

1. This new category are known as REPARATION OFFERINGS (make amends [financially?])
  - a. The Hebrew word is usually connected with guilt
  - b. The function of this sacrificial act is more than a mere expression of guilt.
  - c. The primary concern here: when people misuse sacred things

### **Leviticus 6:1-7**

<sup>6</sup> The LORD said to Moses: <sup>2</sup> "If anyone sins and is unfaithful to the LORD by deceiving a neighbor about something entrusted to them or left in their care or about something stolen, or if they cheat their neighbor, <sup>3</sup> or if they find lost property and lie about it, or if they swear falsely about any such sin that people may commit— <sup>4</sup> when they sin in any of these ways and realize their guilt, they must return what they have stolen or taken by extortion, or what was entrusted to them, or the lost property they found, <sup>5</sup> or whatever it was they swore falsely about. They must make restitution in full, add a fifth of the value to it and give it all to the owner on the day they present their guilt offering. <sup>6</sup> And as a penalty they must bring to the priest, that is, to the LORD, their guilt offering, a ram from the flock, one without defect and of the proper value. <sup>7</sup> In this way the priest will

*make atonement for them before the LORD, and they will be forgiven for any of the things they did that made them guilty."*

1. This was longer, but I wanted it read to see the beginning of a communal code
2. There are sometimes instances where people take advantage financially of others.
3. In such cases, restitution must be made.
4. Note it's MORE THAN JUST MAKING IT RIGHT WITH THE INDIVIDUAL:  
When we sin against people, we sin against God.

## **CONCLUSION**

1. So in this text, we examined PURIFICATION and REPARATION
  - a. Back to the chart: How are we able to bridge this chasm?
  - b. Many will say that the sacrificial system here was unable to do it. They're wrong.
  - c. Ultimately, God used sacrifices as a means to display his grace. It worked.
  - d. The better system is when God PERSONALLY infused grace through the cross

## **Romans 5:9-11**

*"Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! <sup>10</sup> For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! <sup>11</sup> Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation."*

JESUS IS THE ONE WHO BRIDGES THE DIVIDE