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## Leviticus 4

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

## Leviticus 4.

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### FOCUS: OFFERINGS FOR UNINTENTIONAL SIN

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#### Topics.

- Unintentional sin offerings.
  - A bull offering for the unintentional sin of an anointed priest.
  - A bull offering and the unintentional sin of the whole congregation.
  - a bull offering and the unintentional sin of a leader.
  - A goat offering and the unintentional sin of the common people.
  - A lamb offering and the unintentional sin of the common people.
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**Introduction:** the book of Leviticus is about ceremonial rules and civil laws that God gave to Moses after He had given him the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai.

- These are the statutes and rules and laws that the LORD made between him and the people of Israel through Moses on Mount Sinai. (Lev. 26:46).

Either on Mount Sinai or when he met with him in the Tabernacle (also called the tent of meeting) when they were in the wilderness near the Mountain. Moses was to give these ceremonial laws to the Levitical priesthood, they embrace rules concerning sacrifices, offerings and worship; the ordination of Aaron and his sons and their ceremonial cleanness; the Day of Atonement; feasts and holy days and the Year of Jubilee. The civil and social laws and laws of justice he was to give to the government of Israel to implement within their society. The ceremonial and civil laws were not given to the secular world but are laws God gave to the nation of Israel. The central message is that God is holy and requires His people to be holy. The book also shows that God graciously provides atonement for sin through the shedding of blood. Most Jews and Christians recognise Moses as the author, writing sometime after the giving of the Law (about 1445 B.C.).

**NOTE:** for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

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**The previous chapter:** covered the sacrifice of the lamb and goat offered before the LORD as peace offering, and the fat, the entrails, the two kidneys, the loins and long lobe of the liver, being offered as a burnt offering and pleasing aroma to the God.

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### UNINTENTIONAL SIN

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#### LEVITICUS 4:1-2

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#### Unintentional Sin Offerings.

- **Leviticus 4:1-2:** And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>2</sup>"Speak to the people of Israel, saying, If anyone sins unintentionally (ignorance in KJV) in any of the LORD'S commandments about things not to be done, and does any one of them.

The focus of this chapter is upon the unintentional sin of an anointed priest, the whole congregation of Israel, a leader and the common people. The sin and the trespass offering mentioned here are introduced as a new command, whereas the following three offerings were practised among the Israelites prior to the giving of the Law.

1. The burnt offering (Lev. 1:1-3).
2. The grain offering (Lev. 2:1).
3. The peace offering (Lev. 3:1).

These three offerings had been offered prior to the law being given on Mount Sinai and those who offered them did have a consciousness of sin to make atonement for it. Each of these offerings contain the phrase, "When any one of you brings an offering," because all three were purely voluntary offerings, no special occasion was required for the people to bring any one of these three offerings. In contrast to these three volumetry offerings the people are now commanded to bring a sacrifice for sin to make atonement once they become conscious that they had done wrong before the LORD. This sacrificial offering of an innocent animal being offered up for sin, foreshadows the Lamb of God without blemish who offered himself up once and for all, for our sin so that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16).

**The sins in focus:** amongst commentators there are many different ideas as to what sins are in focus here, but there really should be no question since we are told four time that it refers to sins that a person unintentionally does against the LORD's commandments that should not be done (v2, 13, 22, 27). This means that the sins would embrace:

- Acts, behaviour and practises that are contrary to the ten commandments; the ceremonial laws concerning sacrifices; the Day of Atonement, the Sabbath Day, eating of unclean and clean foods etc., and not doing things according to the law and God's holiness that we know we should do.

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These sin-offerings were only required when the conscience accused the offender of having committed to some form of wrong doing before the LORD.

**Following are five reasons for sin offerings:**

1. To motivate the Israelites to greater diligence in the study of God's laws and statutes.
2. To show the Israelites that to disobey God in any respect whatever and neglect their duties would bring Gods wrath upon them, unless atonement was made for their sin.
3. To highlight the seriousness of sin and relieve the conscience from guilt.
4. To provide food for the priesthood. Most sin offerings became food for the priest and his family (the only offerings that could not be eaten were those whose blood was taken into the temple).
5. To ingrain upon their mind that without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. (Heb. 9:22).

**Two classes of sin:** The Bible distinguishes the following two classes of sin:

1. Unintentional (ignorance in KJV) sin.
2. Presumptuous sin.

**Unintentional (ignorance in KJV) sin:** are when a person commits any of the following:

- Eats the flesh of the sacrifice of the LORD's peace offerings unaware that they are unclean and therefore should not eat of it. (Lev. 7:20).
- Unknowingly profanes the Sabbath Day in some way. (Exodus 31:14).
- Commit outward acts against any of the commandments or ceremonial rites and laws of the LORD without being aware of it.

If Israel as a nation, or an individual or a sojourner amongst Israel did something unintentionally that was against the law and they offered a sacrifice according to the laws of burnt offerings they would be forgiven. (Num. 15:22-29). In contrast to this if Israel as a nation, or an individual or a sojourner amongst Israel did anything with a high hand (meaning pridefully, arrogantly and willfully), reviles and scorns the LORD they were to be utterly cut off from among God's people, because they have despised (spurned and rejected) His word and broken His commandment. By their own actions and behavior, they bring God's condemnation upon themselves, because they show no sign of remorse or repentance. (Num. 15:30-31). When a person is said to sin unintentionally (in ignorance in KJV) it carries the idea of doing something wrong but being unaware that it was wrong due to not knowing it was wrong, because of a lack of knowledge or being unaware that one had done wrong (i.e., touched something unclean). The statement, "If anyone sins unintentionally and does anything against one of the LORD's commandments (Lev. 4:2), shows that the sins refer to outward actions and behavior such as sins of a ritual and ceremonial nature and sins against God's law and not inward thoughts. They embrace sins that a person would not have committed had they known at the time it was a sin as opposed to sins committed with a deliberate purpose

**Presumptuous sins:** concerning presumptuous sins the Bible says, "the person who does anything with a high hand (presumptuously in KJV), whether he is an Israelite or a sojourner, reviles the LORD, and shall be cut off from among the people. (Num. 15:30). The word, presumptuous here comes from the Hebrew word (yad), which means hand, in this context it carries the idea of power, especially arrogant power deliberately used against God. To act presumptuously before God, means to fail to observe the limits of what is permitted or appropriate before God. It carries the idea of being overconfident, arrogant, egotistical, overbold and audacious. A person who is presumptuous shows little respect for God and for others by doing things they know they have no right to do. When God describes someone as presumptuous, it means He disapproves of them because they are doing something that is against His laws, statutes and commands.

- For if we go on sinning deliberately (willfully in KJV) after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,<sup>27</sup> but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. (Heb. 10:26-27).

**The Day of Atonement:** sins of the entire nation were covered by the great day of atonement:

- For on this day shall atonement be made for you to cleanse you. You shall be clean before the LORD from all your sins. (Lev. 16:30).

Once a year throughout Israel's generations they were to hold a Sabbath on the Day of Atonement. The anointed high priest clothed in holy linen garments was to make atonement to cleanse the holy sanctuary; the tent of meeting; the altar; the priests and the people of Israel. This was to be a statute once a year throughout the generations of Israel because of all their sins (Lev. 16:29-34).

## **A Bull Offering for the Unintentional Sin of an Anointed Priest.**

- **Leviticus 4:3-12:** if it is the anointed priest who sins, thus bringing guilt on the people, then he shall offer for the sin that he has committed a bull from the herd without blemish to the LORD for a sin offering. <sup>4</sup>He shall bring the bull to the entrance of the tent of meeting before the LORD and lay his hand on the head of the bull and kill the bull before the LORD. <sup>5</sup>And the anointed priest shall take some of the blood of the bull and bring it into the tent of meeting, <sup>6</sup>and the priest shall dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle part of the blood seven times before the LORD in front of the veil of the sanctuary. <sup>7</sup>And the priest shall put some of the blood on the horns of the altar of fragrant incense before the LORD that is in the tent of meeting, and all the rest of the blood of the bull he shall pour out at the base of the altar of burnt offering that is at the entrance of the tent of meeting. <sup>8</sup>And all the fat of the bull of the sin offering he shall remove from it, the fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails <sup>9</sup>and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them at the loins and the long lobe of the liver that he shall remove with the kidneys <sup>10</sup>(just as these are taken from the ox of the sacrifice of the peace offerings); and the priest shall burn them on the altar of burnt offering. <sup>11</sup>But the skin of the bull and all its flesh, with its head, its legs, its entrails, and its dung— <sup>12</sup>all the rest of the bull—he shall carry outside the camp to a clean place, to the ash heap, and shall burn it up on a fire of wood. On the ash heap it shall be burned up.

**The tent of meeting:** (v4) refers to the tabernacle of Moses. The word tabernacle means testimony and witness, it can refer to the tabernacle itself and to Moses who was a witness and testimony of God before the people. Through the book of Exodus, "The LORD went before the people of Israel by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. (Exod. 13:21-22), but there was no tabernacle built until Exodus chapter seventeen. It was given the following titles:

- The tent of meeting. (Num. 18:4, 6, 21, 22).
- The tent of the testimony. (Num. 17:2, 7, 8).
- The sanctuary. (Num. 18:1, 3, 5).

Moses would pitch the tent outside the camp and a long way from it, he called it the tent of meeting, because everyone who sought the LORD would go outside the camp to the tent of meeting. Whenever Moses went to the tent all the people would stand at their tent door and watch Moses until he had gone into the tent, when he entered the tent the pillar of cloud would descend and at the entrance of it, then the LORD would speak with Moses face to face (from the pillar of cloud) as a man speaks to his friend. When all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, they would stand at their tent door and worship and when Moses came back to the camp, his assistant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, would remain at the tent of meeting. (Exod. 33:1-23)

**The layout of the tabernacle:** the tabernacle was divided into two sections the first section was called the Holy Place the second section was called the Most Holy Place and the court surrounding the tabernacle was called the outer court. The entry into the outer court and the entry into the tabernacle faced east. When the people of Israel entered the gate into the outer court the first thing, they would see was the brazen altar for sacrifices and burnt offerings, behind this was the basin for the priests to wash their hands and feet before ministering and behind the basin was the tabernacle itself. Behind the first curtain of the tabernacle (the entry into the Holy place) on the left was the golden lampstand and on the right the table of shewbread.

The altar of incense was also in the Holy Place in front of the curtain separating the Holy Place from the Most Holy place and the Ark of the Covenant was behind this curtain in the Most Holy Place. The sweet-smelling aroma of the incense would drift over the curtain and into the Most Holy Place. When the anointed priest unintentionally sinned, he not only bought guilt upon himself, but also upon the people. To purify himself and the people from the sin and the guilt he was to:

- Offer a bull from the herd without blemish to the LORD for a sin offering. (v4:3).
- Take the bull to the entrance of the tent of meeting before the LORD and lay his hand on the head of the bull and kill the bull before the LORD. (v4:4).

**The anointed priest was to:**

- Take some of the blood of the bull into the tent of meeting and dip his finger in the blood, then sprinkle part of the blood seven times before the LORD in front of the veil of the sanctuary. (Lev. 4:4-6).
- Put some of the blood on the horns of the altar of fragrant incense before the LORD that is in the tent of meeting
- Pour out the rest of the blood of the bull at the base of the altar of burnt offering that is at the entrance of the tent of meeting. (Lev. 4:7).
- Remove all the fat of the bull that covers the entrails (i.e., innards). (Lev. 4:8).
- Remove the two kidneys with long lobe of the liver at the loins and all the fat that is on them and burn them on the altar. (Lev. 4:9-10).
- Carry the rest of the bull, its skin, its flesh, head, legs, its dung and the remainder of its entrails (innards) to a clean place outside the camp and burn it on a fire of wood on the ash heap. (Lev. 4:11-12).

**The golden altar of fragrant incense:** (v7) in Exodus chapter thirty God gave Moses detailed instructions for the construction of this golden altar which was only used for burning incense. The priest would carry burning coals in censers specially made for this altar from the brazen altar of burnt offerings in the outer court of the tabernacle and bring them into the Most Holy Place and place them on the golden altar of incense (Lev. 16:12), as the incense burnt on the hot coals they produced a delightful fragrant aroma in the Holy Place which would rise above the veil and into the Most Holy Place where the ark of the covenant sat and the presence of the LORD was. The altar was:

- Made of acacia wood completely overlaid with pure gold. It was square, being one cubit long (approximately 1½ feet or a ½ metre) and one cubit wide and its height was two cubits (approximately 3 feet or almost 1 metre). (Exod. 30:1-2).
- On its top it had four horns at each corner made of one piece overlaid with pure gold. (Exod. 30:2-3) and on two opposite sides it had two golden rings through which poles made of acacia wood overlaid with gold were placed to carry the altar with. (Exod. 30:4-5).
- It was in the Holy Place between the golden lampstand and the table of showbread and stood in front of the veil that separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy place in which the ark of the Covenant with the mercy seat that is above the Law stood. It was in the Most Holy Place where the presence of God was (Exod. 25:22) that the LORD met with Moses. (Exod. 30:6).
- When Aaron tended to the lamps every morning and every evening at twilight, he was to burn fragrant incense on the altar. This was a regular incense offering before the LORD throughout Israel's generations. (Exod. 30:7-8). No one was to offer unauthorized incense or a burnt offering, or a grain offering, or pour a drink offering on the altar. (Exod. 30:9).
- Once a year on the Day of Atonement the high priest was to make atonement with the blood of the sin offering, putting it on the horns of the altar. This was a most holy offering to the LORD throughout Israel's generations. (Exod. 30:10).

**The recipe for the incense:** the recipe for making the incense was very specific, the LORD said to Moses to take the following four sweet spices:

1. **Stacte:** refers to a thick gooeey aromatic gum or resin including myrrh. Though the plant or tree that it comes from is not specified, some suppose that it refers to the sap that drips from the tapping of the wood of the balsam tree, whatever it come from it is certain that it was some type of extract of the highest quality.
2. **Onycha:** refers to a scale or shell, such as a sea snail or the membrane of a snail like creature, slug or aromatic mussels found in the Red Sea. In its raw state it needs to be beaten into a very fine powder after which it can be added to other ingredients. Today it is used as an antiseptic cleanser for cuts and wounds; as an antioxidant; as an astringent lotion applied to the skin to reduce bleeding from minor abrasions; as a cosmetic to make the skin less oily and as a cough medicine and sedative.
3. **Galbanum:** refers to a fragrant gum resin that forms on certain plants. It tastes bitter and has a musky aroma. Today Galbanum is used in food and drinks for flavouring and for fragrance in cosmetics and is sometimes applied directly to the skin for wounds.
4. **Frankincense and myrrh:** both frankincense and myrrh are derived from the tree sap or gummy resin that oozes out of the Boswellia and Commiphora trees when their bark is cut. The leaking milky white resin is left to harden and then scraped off the trunk in tear-shaped droplets. It can be used in its dried form or steamed to yield essential oils, and both are prized for their alluring fragrance. A perfumer would blend these four sweet spices together, season them with salt and mix them in equal parts. A portion was to be beaten very small and taken before the ark of the covenant in the Most Holy Place of the tent of meeting where the LORD would meet with Moses. No other incense was to be burned on the altar and the people were not to make any perfumes for themselves using this recipe, for it was to be holy to the LORD. Whoever did use the recipe to make a perfume for themselves was to be cut off from the LORD's people. The priests would refill this special mixture of incense on the golden altar in the morning and evening, so a sweet-smelling smoke rose from it day and night. (Exod. 30:34-38).

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**The altar of incense and Legalistic ritual:** more important than burning the proper incense at the proper time with the proper fire and the proper implements was having a proper heart before God. It was not enough for the Israelites to legalistically go through the rituals required by the Law to be right with God. The LORD wanted their hearts and lives to be right, not just their outward ceremonial formalities. During Isaiah's era Israel maintained the temple rites, even though they were disobedient to God. This, is why God said through the prophet:

- Bring no more vain offerings; incense is an abomination to me. New moon and Sabbath and the calling of convocations—I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly. (Isaiah 1:13).

This same principal applies today, a believer may go to church every Sunday and perform all the ceremonial rites of that church, but if their heart is not right before God, all their religious actions count for nothing.

**The altar of incense and prayer:** in Scripture, incense is often associated with prayer. David prayed:

- Let my prayer be counted as incense before you, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice! (Psalm 141:2).

Zechariah the priest was offering incense in the temple while:

- The whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. (Luke 1:10).

In John's vision of heaven, he saw that the elders around the throne "were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of God's people:

- When he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. (Rev. 5:8).
- Another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer, and he was given much incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar before the throne, (Revelation 8:3).

The altar of incense can be taken to be a symbol of the prayers of God's people. ascending to God as the smoke of the incense ascended into the Most Holy Place of God's presence in the temple of God. The fact that the incense was always burning means that we should always pray and not lose heart. (Luke 18:1), confirming this the apostle Paul said to the Thessalonians, pray without ceasing giving thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. (1 Thess. 5:17-18). The altar of incense was holy to the LORD and sin was atoned for by the blood of the sacrifice sprinkled on its horns, likewise, it is the blood of Christ applied by faith to our lives that makes our prayers acceptable to God and counted holy and pleasing to Him, because of Jesus' sacrifice. It should be of great comfort to every faithful believer to know that we can now enter by faith into God's holy presence with full assurance, and that He considers our prayers to be like the sweet smell of incense because of our devotion faith and love for His Son the Lord Jesus Christ. Mark tells us that the veil of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. (Mark 15:38), signifying that God has opened the way for those in Christ to enter-into His presence in the Most Holy Place. The author of Hebrews encourages the faithful to enter with confidence the Most Holy Place through the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the veil of the temple. (Hebrews 10:19-20).

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**The altar of incense and Christ our mediator:** the altar of incense was situated before the mercy-seat of the ark of the covenant, which beautifully symbolises Christ our Advocate standing in the presence of the Father. The brazen altar of burnt sacrifices in the outer court signified Christ's death on our behalf, while the golden altar of incense in the Holy Place symbolise Christ's mediation and intercession for his people. In the book of Hebrews, it is written:

- He holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. <sup>25</sup>Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. (Heb. 7:24-25).
- Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. (Hebrews 9:24).

The incense was to be continually burning on the golden altar of incense, signifying the perpetual nature of Christ's mediation and his intercession on our behalf and in the same way that the aroma of the incense ascended to God, likewise Christ's intercession for us is a sweet-smelling fragrance to his heavenly Father. We all love to smell things that have a sweet fragrance, since the people of Israel were strongly warned not to make a perfume from the recipe of the incense for themselves, it is certain that this incense made to burn before the LORD produced a fragrance that would be pleasing to our senses. David cried out to the LORD, saying:

- Let my prayer be counted as incense before you, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice! (Psalm 141:2).

David was not only fully aware that the priests stood before the inner veil of the temple to burn incense twice a day so that the smoke would carry a sweet-smelling aroma into the Most Holy Place where the presence of God dwelt, but also understood that the prayers he was offering up were



a sweet fragrance to the LORD and with this understanding desired that his prayers would be as consistent as the burning of incense that took place in the temple every evening and morning. In the book of Revelation we read of an angel standing at the altar with a golden censer, who was given vast amounts of incense to offer with the prayers of all the faithful on the golden altar that stood before the throne and are told that the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the faithful, rose before God from the hand of the angel. (Rev. 8:3-4). Whoever is devoted to Jesus is amongst all the faithful spoken of here. Their prayers are the incense and the fragrance they bring is a blessing and sweet-smelling aroma to God who loves to hear from His children.

**The altar of incense and faith:** for the incense to produce its sweet-smelling fragrance, it had to be placed on the altar and burned with fire, likewise faith that is tested by the troubles, sorrows and hardships of this life and endures is a pleasing aroma before God. The apostle Peter said:

- The tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 1:7).

**The altar of incense and the throne of God:** burning incense on the altar was a continuous act which means that a pleasing aroma would be continually flowing into the Most Holy Place of the temple where the presence of God dwelt, signifying that the prayers of the faithful continually ascend as a pleasant fragrance before the throne of God in heaven because of the righteous of our Saviour.

- Another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer, and he was given much incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar before the throne, <sup>4</sup>and the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God from the hand of the angel. (Rev. 8:3-4).

One of the great lessons we learn from the altar of incense is that the priests could not burn incense according to their own ideas, likewise, we cannot bring prayers to God based on our own false claims of righteousness but must faithfully offer them in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, our sinless high priest and mediator.

**When the anointed priest sins:** (v3) the highest office a priest could hold before the LORD and before the people was that of a high priest, however, though this was the most honoured position this verse shows that it did not mean that they were free of sin and that God never had any infallible priest amongst His people on earth, for even the anointed high priest was liable to unintentionally fall into sins of ignorance, when this happened he was to:

- Offer a bull without blemish from the herd (v4) and take it to the entrance of the tent of meeting, lay his hand on its head and kill it before the LORD. (v4).
- Take some of the blood of the bull into the tent of meeting (v5), dip his finger into the blood and sprinkle part of it seven times before the LORD in front of the veil of the sanctuary (i.e., the Most Holy Place). (v6).
- Put some of the blood on the horns of the golden altar of fragrant incense before the LORD that is in the tent of meeting. (v7).
- Pour the rest of the blood out at the base of the brazen altar of burnt offering in the outer court before the entrance of the tent of meeting. (v7).
- Cut off all the fat that covers the entrails and cut out the two kidneys with the loins and the long lobe of the liver and all the fat that is on them. (v8-9).
- Burn the fat, the entrails, the two kidneys, the loins and the long lobe of the liver on the altar of burnt offering. (v10).

- The rest of the bull, i.e., (the skin, flesh, head, legs, entrails and its dung the priest was to carry outside the camp to the ash heap and burn it on a fire of wood. (v11-12).

This Levitical law highlights the following two things:

1. Even the chief of the priesthood was but a frail being like we all are and was exposed to the same infirmities as the congregation.
2. No one no matter how high the honored position they hold in a church has any reason to feel superior.

Concerning Jesus in the book of Hebrews, it is written:

- He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself. <sup>28</sup>For the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever. (Heb. 7:27-28).

The processions of the sin-offerings are set in descending order according to a person's rank and responsibility.

**Bringing guilt on the people:** (v3) the English Standard Bible says:

- When the anointed priest sins he brings guilt on the people.

The King James Bible says:

- When the anointed priest sins according to the sin of the people.

**When the anointed priest sins he brings guilt on the people:** (ESB) may mean that by his sin he brings guilt and punishment upon the people or carry the idea that his sin brings shame upon the people, much like priests that abuse children bring shame upon Christianity.

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**According to the sin of the people:** (KJB) would carry the idea that the high priest sins, in the same manner as all people do. These verses highlight the truth that the law that made men with sinful infirmities high priests had no power to bring them to perfection since they like everyone else needed to offer sacrifices for their own sin.

- Now if perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need would there have been for another priest to arise after the order of Melchizedek, rather than one named after the order of Aaron? (Hebrews 7:11).

**Forgiveness:** the high priest made atonement for himself.

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## A BULL OFFERING FOR THE WHOLE CONGREGATION

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### LEVITICUS 4:13-21

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#### A Bull Offering and Unintentional Sin of the Whole Congregation

- **Leviticus 4:13-21:** "If the whole congregation of Israel sins unintentionally and the thing is hidden from the eyes of the assembly, and they do any one of the things that by the LORD'S commandments ought not to be done, and they realize their guilt, <sup>14</sup>when the sin which they have committed becomes known, the assembly shall offer a bull from the herd for a sin offering and bring it in front of the tent of meeting. <sup>15</sup>And the elders of the congregation shall lay their hands on the head of the bull before the LORD, and the bull shall be killed before the LORD. <sup>16</sup>Then the anointed priest shall bring some of the blood of the bull into the tent of meeting, <sup>17</sup>and the priest shall dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle it seven times before the LORD in front of the veil. <sup>18</sup>And he shall put some of the blood on the horns of the altar that is in the tent of meeting before the LORD, and the

rest of the blood he shall pour out at the base of the altar of burnt offering that is at the entrance of the tent of meeting. <sup>19</sup>And all its fat he shall take from it and burn on the altar. <sup>20</sup>Thus shall he do with the bull. As he did with the bull of the sin offering, so shall he do with this. And the priest shall make atonement for them, and they shall be forgiven. <sup>21</sup>And he shall carry the bull outside the camp and burn it up as he burned the first bull; it is the sin offering for the assembly.

From these verses we learn when the whole congregation of Israel unintentionally sinned and they became aware that they had done wrong before the LORD the congregation of Israel was to offer a bull for a sin offering and bring it in front of the tent of meeting. The elders were then to lay their hands on the head of the bull and it was to be killed before the LORD. (v14-15). We are not told who killed the bull, however in most cases the person making the offering was the person that cut the animal into its pieces to prepare it for sacrifice and then gave it to the High priest to burn on the altar, so in this offering it is most likely the elders or a chief elder killed the bull and prepared it for the priest on behalf of the congregation. The anointed priest was:

- To bring some of the blood of the bull into the tent of meeting, then dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle it seven times before the LORD in front of the veil. (v16-17).
- To put some of the blood on the horns of the altar in the tent of meeting before the LORD and pour the rest of the blood out at the base of the altar of burnt offering in the outer court before the entrance of the tent of meeting. (v18).
- To take the fat from the offering and burn it on the altar (v19) making atonement for the people and they would be forgiven. (v20).
- To carry the bull (no doubt with the help of the elders, oxen and a wagon) for the sin offering of the assembly outside the camp and burn it up. (v21).

10

The sacrificial animal was to be carried outside the camp and burned to ashes. (Lev. 4:21). This was a sign of putting away sin as a detestable thing, for the body of sin must be destroyed. The apostle Paul wrote:

- I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. <sup>51</sup>Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, <sup>52</sup>in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. <sup>53</sup>For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. (1 Cor. 15:50-53).

In the following verses Paul applies the carrying of the high priests sacrifice outside the camp to Christ being crucified.

- For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy places by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp. <sup>12</sup>So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood. <sup>13</sup>Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured. (Heb. 13:11-13).

**Forgiveness:** the high priest makes atonement for the entire congregation.

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## A BULL OFFERING FOR A LEADER

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### LEVITICUS 4:22-26

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#### A Bull Offering and the Unintentional Sin of a Leader

- **Leviticus 4:22-26:** "When a leader sins, doing unintentionally any one of all the things that by the commandments of the LORD his God ought not to be done, and realizes his guilt, <sup>23</sup>or the sin which he has committed is made known to him, he shall bring as his

offering a goat, a male without blemish, <sup>24</sup>and shall lay his hand on 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. <sup>25</sup>Then the priest shall take some of the blood of the sin offering with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering and pour out the rest of its blood at the base of the altar of burnt offering. <sup>26</sup>And all its fat he shall burn on the altar, like the fat of the sacrifice of peace offerings. So, the priest shall make atonement for him for his sin, and he shall be forgiven.

When a leader unintentionally sins, and becomes aware of it he was to:

- Bring a male goat without blemish as an offering and lay his hand on its head and kill it in the place where they kill the burnt offering before the LORD on the north side of the altar (Leviticus 1:11).

The high priest was to take:

- Some of the blood with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering in the outer court.
- Pour the rest of the blood at the base of the altar.
- Burn all the fat on the altar.

**Forgiveness:** the high priest makes atonement for the leader. Though we don't offer sacrifices today, the principal remains the same, when a leader sins and they become aware of their sin they must repent and turn from their sin. If they knowingly and willfully continue in it after it has been exposed rather than forgiveness, they bring condemnation upon themselves.

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## A GOAT OFFERING FOR THE COMMON PEOPLE

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### LEVITICUS 4:27-31

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11

#### A Goat offering and the Unintentional Sin of the Common People

- **Leviticus 4:27-31:** "If anyone of the common people sins unintentionally in doing any one of the things that by the LORD's commandments ought not to be done, and realizes his guilt, <sup>28</sup>or the sin which he has committed is made known to him, he shall bring for his offering a goat, a female without blemish, for his sin which he has committed. <sup>29</sup>And he shall lay his hand on the head of the sin offering and kill the sin offering in the place of burnt offering. <sup>30</sup>And the priest shall take some of its blood with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering and pour out all the rest of its blood at the base of the altar. <sup>31</sup>And all its fat he shall remove, as the fat is removed from the peace offerings, and the priest shall burn it on the altar for a pleasing aroma to the LORD. And the priest shall make atonement for him, and he shall be forgiven.

If anyone of the common people unintentionally sinned, when they realize their guilt, they were to bring a female goat or lamb without blemish, if they brought a goat:

1. The offender was to shall lay his hand on the head of the goat and kill it in the place of burnt offerings (v29) on the north side of the brazen altar of burnt offerings in the outer court. (Lev. 1:11).
2. The priest was then to take some of its blood with his finger and put it on the horns of the brazen altar of burnt offering and pour out the rest at the base of the altar. (Lev. 4:30).
3. Then the offender who had killed the goat was to cut out all its fat in the same way as it is removed from the peace offerings. (Lev. 4:31). Leviticus chapter three shows that the order of peace offerings was as follows. The sinner was to lay his hand on the head of his offering and kill it at the entrance of the tent of meeting. (Lev. 3:2) on the north

side of the brazen altar of burnt offering. Immediately after the sinner had killed the animal the high priest was to throw the blood against the sides of the altar. (Lev. 2). Then the sinner was to cut out the entrails (innards), the two kidneys and the long lobe of the liver and all the fat that was on them and then give the portions to the high priest to burn on the altar as a food offering with a pleasing aroma to the LORD. (Leviticus 3:3-5).

4. The high priest would make atonement for the sinner and he would be forgiven. (Leviticus 4:31).

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## OVERVIEW

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**The sin of a high priest and the blood:** if the high priest sinned, he was to take the blood of a bull into the temple for his sin and dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle some of it seven times in front of the veil, put some on the four horns of the golden altar of fragrant incense in the Holy Place and pour the rest out at the base of the brazen altar of burnt offering in the outer court. (Lev. 4:3-7).

**The sin of the whole congregation and the blood:** for the sin of the whole congregation the high priest was to take the blood of a bull into the temple for their sin and dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle some of it seven times in front of the veil, put some on the four horns of the golden altar of fragrant incense in the Holy Place and pour the rest out at the base of the altar of burnt offering in the outer court. (Lev. 4:13-18).

**The sin of a leader and the blood:** when a leader sinned the blood was not taken into the temple, but rather the high priest was to take with his finger some of the blood of a male goat and put it on the on the four horns of the brazen altar of burnt offering in the outer court, the rest was poured out at the base of the altar of burnt offering. (Lev. 4:22-25).

**The sin of the common people and the blood:** when the common people sinned the blood was not taken into the temple, but rather the high priest was to take with his finger some of the blood of a female lamb or female goat and put it on the on the four horns of the brazen altar of burnt offering in the outer court, the rest was poured out at the base of the altar of burnt offering. (Lev. 4:32-34).

**Before the LORD:** when a high priest, the whole congregation and a leader sinned, it is said that their offering (of a male animal) was presented before the LORD. (Lev. 4:3-7) (Lev. 4:13-17), because the high priest took the blood of the male animal sacrifice into the Holy Place of the temple. In contrast to this when the common people sinned it is not said that their female animal offering was presented before the LORD. (Lev. 4:13-17), because the blood of the female goat or lamb was not taken into the Holy Place of the temple.

**The place where they killed the burnt offering:** the sacrificial animal was to be killed in the place where they kill the burnt offerings. The following verses give us the location of this place for killing sacrificial animals:

- The animal sacrifice was killed on the north side of the brazen altar of burnt offerings in the outer court. (Lev. 1:11).
- The brazen altar is in front of the entrance of the tent of meeting (in front of the door of the tabernacle of the congregation in KJV). (Lev. 1:5).
- The brazen altar of burnt offering was before the door of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting (the tent of the congregation in KJV). (Exod. 40:6).

This means that the place where all animal sacrifices were killed was in the outer court in front of the entrance of the tent of meeting on the north

side, the implication is that the LORD is in the north. The following verse speaks of God dwelling in the north and His glory coming out of the north.

- Out of the north comes golden splendor; God is clothed with awesome majesty. (Job 37:22).

In the book of Isaiah, we are told that Lucifer (Satan) in his rebellion said in his heart:

- I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north. (Isaiah 14:13).

This verse clearly implies that the dwelling place of God is in the north.

- Great is the LORD and greatly to be praised in the city of our God! His holy mountain, <sup>2</sup>beautiful in elevation, is the joy of all the earth, Mount Zion, in the far north, the city of the great King. (Psalm 48:1-2).

This is a clear reference to the New Jerusalem spoken of in the following verse:

- You have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering. (Heb. 12:22).

These verses signify that the heavenly city of God and of Christ is in the north, while the words, "Beautiful in elevation in the far north," (Psalm 48:2), is a reference to the fact that God has a beautiful overview of the entire universe and of the whole earth. From these verses we see that Scripturally north and northward speak of upward and as such signifies heaven.

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## A LAMB OFFERING FOR THE COMMON PEOPLE

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### LEVITICUS 4:32-35

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13

#### A Lamb offering and the Unintentional Sin of the Common People

- **Leviticus 4:32-35:** "If he brings a lamb as his offering for a sin offering, he shall bring a female without blemish <sup>33</sup>and lay his hand on the head of the sin offering and kill it for a sin offering in the place where they kill the burnt offering. <sup>34</sup>Then the priest shall take some of the blood of the sin offering with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering and pour out all the rest of its blood at the base of the altar. <sup>35</sup>And all its fat he shall remove as the fat of the lamb is removed from the sacrifice of peace offerings, and the priest shall burn it on the altar, on top of the LORD's food offerings. And the priest shall make atonement for him for the sin which he has committed, and he shall be forgiven.

If anyone of the common people unintentionally sinned and they realized their guilt they were to bring a female lamb without blemish for their offering and lay their hand on its head and kill it in the place where they kill the burnt offering. (v33). For the place where they killed burnt offerings, see the notes above titled: "The Place where they Killed the Burnt Offering," following (v:27-31) (above). The high priest was then to take some of the blood with his finger and put it on the horns of the brazen altar of burnt offering and pour the rest of its blood out at the base of the altar. (v34). Then the person who killed the animal was to cut out all the fat (as the fat is cut out from the peace offerings). (Lev. 4:34).

**The order of the peace offering:** Leviticus chapter three shows that the order of peace offerings was as follows. The sinner was to lay his hand on the head of his offering and kill it at the entrance of the tent of meeting. (Lev. 3:2) on the north side of the brazen altar of burnt offering in the outer court. Immediately after the sinner had killed the animal the priest was to throw the blood against the sides of the altar. (Lev. 2). Then the sinner was to cut out the entrails (innards), the two kidneys and the long

lobe of the liver and all the fat that was on them and give the portions to the priest to burn on the brazen altar. The priest would then place the portions on top of the already burning grain offering (also called a meal offering and cereal offering) as a food offering with a pleasing aroma to the LORD. (Leviticus 4:35) (Leviticus 3:3-5). When this is all completed the high priest then makes atonement for the sinner. (v31).

**The principle for unintentional sin:** for the anointed priest, the entire congregation, a priest and leader and the common people was the same, when they were made aware of the sin they had to offer a sin offering. An innocent animal without blemish had to be sacrificed for the guilty, foreshadowing the Lord Jesus Christ the innocent Lamb of God without blemish being sacrificed on the bloodstained cross of Calvary so that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16).

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*As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.*

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