5.

MESSAGE 2

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PEOPLE CONCERNING SIN-OFFERINGS

Leviticus 4:1-5:13

Introduction

The second message from The Tabernacle continued the general theme of the first. It contained instructions for the people concerning an additional type of offering, the sin-offering. Unlike the offerings mentioned in the first message, this offering was new to Israel. Jehovah had mentioned it previously in instructions to Moses at Sinai (Ex. 29:14,36; 30:10), but no mention of the offering is found in the Scriptures prior to Sinai.

The sin-offering symbolized forgiveness for sin. However, conclusions already reached in the INTRODUCTION TO SECTION ONE show that the forgiveness symbolized by this offering was not pardon from the punishment of sin that comes at salvation but removal of sin from the life of a believer. A discerning study of the procedure for the offering will confirm this conclusion. This offering taught the Israelites that, even though they were in covenant relationship with Jehovah, sin was still a part of their experience. That sin could not be ignored. It needed to be confessed, rejected, and forgiven.

This message can be outlined as follows:

Interpretation

CHAPTER 4

Introductory note (4:1)

Verse 1. **And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying,**

These words introduce the second message delivered by Jehovah from The Tabernacle after its dedication. They should not be considered to be a "formula" used to gain support for the teachings they contain. They should be taken for what they claim to be, a statement of fact. They were not a part of the message spoken by Jehovah but a note written by Moses to emphasize that the message was not his but that it was spoken to him by Jehovah.

(1) Offered by an anointed priest (4:2-12)

Verse 2. Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, When someone sins by mistake against any of the commandments of Jehovah [about anything] that should not be done and does one of them,

Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, The word translated "speak" is the same word used in verse 1. First Jehovah spoke to Moses. Then Moses was told to speak to the Israelites. Moses' speaking to the people obviously was literal audible speech. Jehovah's speaking to Moses should be understood in the same way. Interpreting Jehovah's speaking as some kind of spiritual discernment and Moses' speaking as audible speech does a disservice to the text and to Jehovah.

When someone sins. The word translated "someone" means "soul" or "person." It is the same word found in Lev. 2:1 (see comments on that verse in MESSAGE 1 under the heading someone). It referred to any person, male or female.

The word translated "sins" comes from a root meaning "to miss." It was drawn from the idea of missing a target or missing the way in a journey; however, it was not used for missing a personal or secular goal. It always was used in connection with missing or falling short of a moral target or standard. It was the most common Hebrew word for "sin."

The word translated "when" is literally "that." Sometimes it was used to mean "if," but it more naturally means "when" (see comments on Lev. 1:2 in MESSAGE 1 under the heading "And when)." Jehovah was not doubtful about whether the Israelites would sin. He knew that even genuine believers are weak toward temptation and that they will fall short at some point. He told Moses to tell the Israelites what to do when they fell short and sinned.

by mistake.. This phrase literally means "by swerving" or "by going astray." It refers to a certain type of sin. It has traditionally been understood to mean sinning ignorantly, that is, by not knowing what is expected. That understanding is not accurate. A better translation is "in error" or "by mistake." It refers to sins committed out of weakness, not sins committed out of ignorance. It means that the sinner does not deliberately defy God or His commandment, but that he sins because of his human weakness. He knows better, but he is weak and falls short of what is expected of him. His weakness causes him to swerve away from what he should do and what he wants to do.

Numbers 15:24-31 is most helpful in showing the meaning of this term. In that passage, sins of this type are contrasted with "sins of a high hand." The passage clearly shows that "sins of a high hand" are acts committed with the deliberate intention of rejecting Jehovah's commandments and authority. They constitute a deliberate breaking of the covenant, and only a complete renewal of the covenant can erase their effects. Jehovah revealed to Moses through a long struggle for Moses to understand after the incident of the Golden Calf that sins of rebellion could be forgiven and that restoration was possible after such a sin (Ex. 34:5-10). The sin of the Golden Calf broke the covenant between Israel and God, and the only way to recover from that sin was to start over again and establish the covenant with God not just in words but in reality. The offerings of Israel dealt with experiences of people who were in a covenant

relationship with God. Rebellion was not a part of a person's life who was in the covenant. Therefore, no offering could symbolize forgiving open rebellion. Therefore, the offerings of Israel could not deal with "sins of a high hand." God gave Israel a sin-offering, but it dealt not with rebellion but with sins of weakness in the life of a person was in the covenant.

Sins of people in covenant relationship with God were dealt with in this message. Those sins are called "sins by mistake." They were sins committed without the intention of rebelling against God. They were committed, not out of rebellion, but out of weakness. They might have been committed in ignorance. They also might have been committed when the person knew better but did them anyway out of weakness. They were sins committed because the person was weak in the face of temptation. He wanted to do better, but he yielded because he was not strong enough to resist. When God instituted an offering to symbolize removal of sin, he had to speak of this kind of sin. It was the kind of sin that existed in the life of someone in the covenant and the kind of sin that it was possible to symbolize with a fire-offering.

This conclusion is supported by verses 13-14,22-23 of this chapter. Those verses contain the verb form of the noun that occurs in this verse. When properly translated, those verses clearly state that a sinner who committed this type of sin might know he was committing a forbidden act or might not know it (see comments on those verses below.).

Sins "by mistake," whether known or unknown, did not break the covenant. Rather, they were the kind of sins that often are found in the lives of persons who are in covenant relationship with God. The sinner who sins "by mistake" loves and trusts Jehovah. Yet, because of weakness, he falls short of the standard Jehovah requires of him. His sinning shows that he has not yet gained complete mastery over temptation, but he also has not rejected Jehovah or His covenant. Unfortunately, sins "by mistake" were and still are all too "normal" a part of the covenant life. They may be normal, but they are dangerous and serious, and they need to be dealt with. The sin-offering symbolized how to deal with them.[1]

against any of the commandments of Jehovah. The words translated "commandments" occurs here for the first time in Leviticus. It is based on a root that means "to charge," "to order," or "to command." It means that the instructions God was giving to the Israelites were not suggestions. They were orders that the Israelites were obligated to obey. Missing the mark, even while trying to hit it, was not a minor offense. It was an offense against a direct command. Weakness was not an excuse. The Israelites were expected to draw on God's strength, resist temptation, and obey. When they fell short, they were expected to confess their sin and seek reconciliation with God.

The statement "against any of the commandments of Jehovah" makes it clear that the sins in view here were sins concerning which Jehovah had given clear commandments. The sins were not those concerning which the worshiper was uninformed but those that he committed after receiving God's clear instructions. They were not sins of ignorance but sins of weakness. The sinner committed those sins not because He did not know better but because of weakness. They were sins done by mistake, not by stubborn rebellion. As serious as such mistakes are, they could be forgiven because they were not committed out of deliberate rebellion.

[1] KJV always translates this term by "through ignorance," except in Lev. 22:14 where it translates it as "unwittingly" and in Ecc. 5:6; 10:5, where the word occurs without a preposition. There it translates it as "an error." ASV, RSV, and DRV always translate this expression as "unwittingly," except in Ecc. 5:6; 10:5, where they translate it as "an error." MV translates it as "unawares," but in Ecc. 5:6; 10:5 it translates it as "by mistake." Other translations come closer to the true meaning of the word. SGV, JB, NASB, and HCSB translate it as "unintentionally," but in Ecc. 5:6; 10:5 they translate it as "an error." NEB translates it as "inadvertently" but in Ecc. 5:6; 10:5 as "a mistake." Since the versions almost unanimously translate the noun as "an error" or "a mistake" when it occurs without a preposition, they should have translated it in the same way when it occurs with a preposition, that is, translating it as "by error" or "by mistake."

[about anything] that should not be done, and does one of them. The sins referred to were sins about which Jehovah given commandments that they should not be done. They were sins of commission. Repentance from sins of omission could also be symbolized by this offering, but they were not specifically included in the words of this verse.

Verse 3. **If the anointed priest sins according to the sin of the people; so as to harm the people, then he shall offer to Jehovah for his sin that he sinned a pristine bull, a son of a herd, as a sin-offering.**

If. The word translated "if" is not the same word as that translated "when" in verse 2. This word properly means "if." The word did not imply that God thought priests could actually be sinless. It was used to specify one kind of people who should offer this offering.

the anointed priest. Anointing priests is mentioned here for the first time in the book of Leviticus. However, ample instructions concerning the meaning and practice of anointing had been given previously. Exodus 28:40-29:37 records Jehovah's instructions concerning ceremonies for setting aside the priests for their service at the altar. Anointing the priests is mentioned in connection with those ceremonies. Exodus 28:41, which says, "And you shall put them (their holy garments) on Aaron your brother and on his sons with him, and you shall anoint them and fill their hands and hallow them." "Anoint" meant to pour oil over them as a sign of God's Spirit coming on them to empower them for service. "Fill their hands" meant to give them jobs to do. "Hallow" meant to make them holy by dedicating them to God's service. All three of these words have a distinct meaning. All three describe actions that were carried out as a part of setting aside the priests to God's service. Anointing was a part of the ceremony that set priests aside to officiate at the altar.

Some have concluded that in these ceremonies only the high priest was anointed with oil, because in Exodus 29:7 God told Moses to put Aaron's special garments on him and then said, "And you shall take the anointing oil, pour [it] on his head, and anoint him." Then God told Moses to put the special garments for Aaron's sons on them, but nothing is said about anointing them with oil. However, Exodus 30:30 says, "And you must anoint Aaron and his sons and hallow them to serve Me as priests." Evidently anointing the regular priests after they were clothed with their special garments was understood. This conclusion is confirmed by Exodus 40:12-15 and by Leviticus 7:35-36; 10:7. Taking these verses together makes it that both the high priest and the regular priests were to be anointed with oil as a part of their dedication ceremonies.

If these instructions did not apply to all priests, then no provision was made for a sin-offering for an ordinary priest. Surely it was not intended that they could be or would be omitted, when all other groups in Israel were included. This conclusion is confirmed by Exodus 29:10 and Leviticus 8:14, where Aaron's sons are shown sharing fully in a sin-offering with their father in just the form described in this chapter. (For further comments on the significance of anointing, see comments on Lev. 8:10 in MESSAGE 10 under the heading And Moses took the anointing oil and anointed and also comments on Lev. 8:12 in the same message.)

Other previous passages also referred to the anointing of priests. Exodus 30:22-33 records that Jehovah gave Moses specific instructions concerning the preparation and use of the special anointing oil that was to be used for anointing the priests and holy objects. The book of Exodus also mentions the anointing oil ten other times (Ex. 25:6; 29:7,21; 31:11; 35:8,15,28; 347:29; 29:38;40:9)

sins. This passage takes for granted that Israel's priests were not perfect men. The mention of sin in the lives of these men who were committed to serving God with their whole lives adds strength to the view that the sin referred to in this chapter was the type of sin that occurs in the life of people who belong to Jehovah. Though the priests were not perfect, any sin in their lives was a serious offense against God. The fact that the priests were mentioned first indicates that sin in the life of spiritual leaders is especially dangerous. Therefore,

they were obligated to be the first to confess their sins and turn from them.

so as to harm the people. A strictly literal translation of these Hebrew words is "according to the offense of the people," but that phrase makes little sense in English. ASV, RSV, SGV, NEB, NASB, JB, ABV, LB, NIV, and HCSB all translate this phrase "so as to bring guilt on the people," or equivalent words. In spite of the strong unity of the translators, this rendering is highly offensive and totally unnecessary. It indicates that the priests' sins made the people guilty. Jehovah has never sanctioned such an idea. People become guilty because they own sins, not because of the sin of someone else.

The Hebrew word translated "harm" in this verse means "offense." It is a word for sin that occurs here for the first time in the Bible. It is not the same word that is translated as "sin" just a few words prior in this same verse. This word is based on a root that means "to offend," "to trespass," "to harm," or "to hurt." It defines sin as an act that offends others—God or other people.

KJV translates both words of the words in this verse as "sin." Other versions translate the second word as "guilt." In spite of the many scholars who have construed it to mean "guilt," little evidence exists to indicate that the word ever had that meaning. It referred not to the guilt incurred but to the offense committed. Even if it could be shown that the word did sometimes mean "guilt," it certainly usually referred to the offense and should be understood in that manner in this verse. Therefore, DRV comes closer to the correct translation by rendering this phrase as "making the people to offend." A much better rendering would be "so as to offend the people" or "so as to harm the people." The idea is that, when a spiritual leader sins, the people are hurt. His influence leads them astray and causes them to doubt and stumble. In Israel, because of a priest's influence on the people, his sins took on a special seriousness. They needed to be confessed immediately.

then he shall offer to Jehovah. The word translated "offer" is the general word for offering an offering. Clearly another type of offering is being introduced, an offering that a worshiper was to offer when he was convicted that he had sinned. The purpose for this offering was completely different from the three kinds of offerings that had been described in MESSAGE 1.

For his sins that he sinned. The word translated "sins" is the word used in verse 2 and just above in this same verse. It means "missing the mark." "Sins that he sinned" is not an expression that we like to use in English, because we do not like to be repetitious in the use of words. The Hebrews did not have that same opinion. They liked to repeat the same word or different forms of the same word in order to emphasize it. The repetition emphasizes that priests needed to be conscious of their sins and repent of them quickly.

a pristine bull, a son of a herd. The word translated "bull" is used again in verses 4,5,7,8,12,14,15,16,20,21. It referred to a male animal of the cow family. The way this word is used in Judges 6:25 shows it did not necessarily mean a young animal. It could refer to a bull of any age. The expression "a son of a herd" has the same significance. All other references to sin-offerings of priests use the word "bull" (Ex. 29:10,11,12,14; Lev. 8:2,14,17; 16:3,6), except Lev. 9:2, which uses "a son of a herd" (see comments on Lev. 9:2 in MESSAGE 13; see also Numbers 8:8 concerning sin-offerings of the Levites). For a discussion of the significance of the gender and pristine condition of the animals, see comments on Leviticus 1:3 in MESSAGE 1 under the heading "a pristine male," and on Leviticus1:5 in MESSAGE 1 under the heading "and he shall kill the bull," and on Leviticus 4:3 under the heading "a pristine bull.")

Instructions that follow in this message specify different animals to be offered as sin-offerings by persons other than priests. A comparison of the animals specified in each case gives insight into the significance of this variation. A priest was to offer a bull (Lev. 4:3), as was also the whole congregation (Lev. 4:13-14). A ruler was to offer a male goat (Lev. 4:22-23). An ordinary citizen was to offer a female goat or a lamb (Lev. 4:27-28). Each succeeding offering was of somewhat lesser value than the previous one. The differences in the animals to be offered represented

the relative seriousness of the effect of the sins of each. The priests and the whole nation were of such strategic importance in Jehovah's work that their sins caused serious damage. Thus, an expensive offering was required to represent their repentance. A ruler held a slightly less strategic place in Jehovah's work, and an ordinary citizen a still slightly lesser place. Thus, less expensive offerings were required to symbolize their repentance. However, every sin in the life of Jehovah's people was serious and needed to be confessed and forgiven.

As in the other offerings, the animal offered was to be whole and healthy. Only such an animal could represent a human life, and only such an offering was worthy to be offered to Jehovah (see comments on Lev. 1:3 in MESSAGE 1 under the heading a pristine male).

for a sin offering. The word translated "sin offering" is identical to the word that means simply "sin" (see comments on Lev. 4:2 in this message under the heading When someone sins). The context makes it obvious that more than the offensive act is meant by the word in this case. Thus, we must take it as the name of a fourth type of offering. The best rendering of the name in English is "sin-offering." The sin-offering is not mentioned in the Scriptures prior to Sinai, indicating that it was first introduced at Sinai.. It was mentioned three times in prior instructions to Moses at Sinai (Ex. 29:14,36; 30:10) in anticipation of the description in this chapter. In this message, Jehovah introduced a new worship idea, that people are responsible to God for their sins when they worship Him.[2]

[2] KJV, RSV, NASB, LB, ABV, NWV, NIV, and HCSB consistently translate the name of this offering as "sin offering." ASV, NEB, SGV, MV add a hyphen in the name and translate the title uniformly. NAB usually renders it "sin offering" but adds the hyphen in a few instances. DRV translates it as "sin offering" but often understands the word to refer to the sin where most translations see it as a reference to the offering. JB sometimes translates it "sin-offering" but most often uses "sacrifice for sin." English versions have handled this term more satisfactorily than they have the names of any of the other offerings.

Verse 4. **And he shall bring the bull to the entrance to The Tent of Meeting to Jehovah's face, and shall press his hand on the bull's head, and kill the bull before Jehovah,**

The symbols in this verse are already familiar from the descriptions of the rededication-offering and the slaughter-offering. They hold the same significance in this offering (see comments on Lev. 1:3-5; 3:1-2 in MESSAGE 1.). However, the same symbols took on special significance in connection with each separate offering. Bringing the sin-offering to the sanctuary showed that the only way an Israelite could rid his life of sin was to bring it to Jehovah. Pressing his hands on the sin-offering showed that the animals represented the sinner and that he was taking action to overcome his sin. Killing the sin-offering showed that the action that enabled Jehovah to forgive and remove sins was for the offender to totally surrender his life to God. It also indicated that the promised Son was going to going to give His life to obtain pardon from sin for all those who worship Him in truth by paying the full price for the punishment of theirs sins.

Verses 5-6**. 5 And the anointed priest shall take some of the bull's blood, and he shall bring it into The Tent of Meeting.**

6 And the priest shall dip his finger in the blood, and shall splatter some of the blood seven times at Jehovah's face, at the face of the veil of the Holy [Place].

And the anointed priest. This expression is identical to the one in verse 3, but in this verse it refers to the officiating priest rather than to the priest who is confessing his sin. In all other cases, the priest, not the offerer, handled the blood. The same must be true in this case, so the priest in this case is the priest who officiated, not the priest who was confessing his sins. The expression emphasizes that the officiating priest had to be anointed, to be sure he was authorized to officiate at the altar. The purpose was to have a priest who was properly instructed and informed to be able to protect the offerings from corruption.

shall take [some] of the bull's blood, and he shall bring it into The Tent of Meeting. And the priest shall dip his finger in the blood, and shall splatter some of the blood seven times at Jehovah's face at the face of the veil. The handling of the blood was an especially significant part of the sin-offering of a priest. It was to be handled in a distinct and different way from sin-offerings for rulers or for ordinary citizens, as will be seen in further instructions in this message.

First, the officiating priest was to take some of the blood into the outer room of The Tent of Meeting. There he was to dip his finger in the blood and splatter a little of it toward the veil that separated the Holy Place from the Holiness of Holinesses (or the Most Holy [Place]). The word translated "splatter" in this verse is a different word from the word that was used in Leviticus 1:5. This word indicates that the priest was to thump some of the blood from the bowl with his finger. He was to do so seven times. He was to splatter it "at Jehovah's face, at the face of the veil of the Holy [Place]." Both of those expressions have the same meaning. "At Jehovah's face" means in Jehovah's presence. The offering was not being done by the priests only. Jehovah was watching and participating. "At the veil" means toward the beautiful curtain that separated the outer room of The Tabernacle from the inner room. The inner room was the most holy part of The Tabernacle (Ex. 26:31-37), and it symbolized the full and perfect presence of God (Ex. 25:20-22; 26:33-34). Therefore, splattering the blood toward the veil also means that it was splattered toward Jehovah. Splattering the blood toward Jehovah symbolized that the repentant priest was forgiven for his sins. Splattering it seven times symbolized the completeness of his forgiveness. He was forgiven because splattering the blood symbolized that he was surrendering his life to God and trusting in the coming of the promised Son to suffer for his sins.

of the Holy [Place]. This word is used here for the first time in Leviticus. The term is literally "The Holiness," but it did not refer to the quality of holiness but to the place that was holy (see comments on Lev. 2:3 in MESSAGE 1 under the heading "[It is] a holiness of holinesses out of the fire-offerings of Jehovah. To be understood by English readers, it is best to translate as "The Holy [Place]." It has the same meaning as the name "The Holy Place" in Leviticus 6:9, except that there the name contains the word "Place" and modifies it with the adjective "Holy."

Sometimes the term "The Holy [Place]" was applied to the whole worship area (Ex. 30:13,24; 36:1,3,4,6; 40:9; Lev. 10:4). At other times it was applied to the courtyard (10:17,18; 14:13). At least one time, it was applied to the outer room of The Tabernacle, (Ex. 26:33). Most often, it was applied to the inner room of The Tabernacle (Ex. 28:29,35; 35:19; 39:1,41; Lev. 16:2,3,17,20,23,27,33). Here it seems to refer to the whole tent portion of the Tabernacle complex, because the veil divided between both segments of it.[3]

Taking the blood into The Holy [Place], the outer room of The Tabernacle, and splattering it toward the veil symbolized even more than forgiveness. It also symbolized that the priest was restored to his place of service in The Tabernacle. He was fully accepted again to serve in special nearness to God. Forgiveness for his sins restored him to the privilege of service in The Tabernacle and at the altar.

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[3] KJV, ASV, RSV translate this term as "the sanctuary" where they understand it to refer to the whole Tabernacle area, and as "the holy place" where they understand it to refer to one of its parts. DRV variously translates it as "the temple," "the sanctuary," "the holy places," "the holy place"; ABV, "the sanctuary," "the holy place," "the holy of holies," "the sacred place," "the holy enclosure"; LB "the sanctuary," "the Tabernacle," "the Holy of Holies," "the Holy Place," "the holy place." SGV, NAB, NEB, MV, NWV, JB do not understand this word to always refer to The Tabernacle when it is used with the article. Where they do interpret it to refer to The Tabernacle, they vary their translations as follows: SGV, "the sanctuary," "the sacred place"; NASB, "the sanctuary," "the holy place; NEB, "the sanctuary," "the sacred precincts," "the holy place," "the Holy Place"; MV, "the sanctuary," "the sacred place," "the sacred interior, "the inner sanctuary," "the sacred court"; NWV, "the holy place," "the sanctuary," "the Holy"; NAB, "the sanctuary," "the holy place," "the inmost part of the sanctuary," "the sacred place"; JB, "the sanctuary," "the Holy Place," "the sacred precincts." HCSB usually translates it as "sanctuary" but also uses "holy place," "inner sanctuary," and "*most* holy place." This term is a difficult term to translate into English, but surely English readers deserve more consistent renderings than the translations have provided.

Verse 7. **And the priest shall put [some] of the blood on the horns of the altar of incense of spices at Jehovah's face, which [is] inside The Tent of Meeting; and he must pour the rest of the blood of the bull on the base of the altar of the rededication-offering, which [is at] the entrance of The Tent of Meeting.**

And the priest shall put some of the blood on the horns of the altar of incense of spices, which is inside The Tent of Meeting, at Jehovah's face. Second, the priest was to smear some of the blood on the horns of the altar of incense of spices (Ex. 30:1-10). Jehovah was careful to distinguish between this altar and the altar where offerings were offered by designating that it was located inside The Tabernacle. It actually was located in the outer room of The Tabernacle. The incense for that altar was prepared from a special mixture of spices, and it was kept smoking on that altar to symbolize the sweetness of prayer (Ex. 30:34-38). The horns of the altar symbolized the power of prayer. That idea was drawn from the fact that horns were the most powerful part of an animal. Smearing some of the blood on the horns of that altar symbolized that the priest was accepted again to his responsibility to pray for the nation and for the people and that his prayers were again effective and powerful. "At Jehovah's face" means that Jehovah was watching from behind the veil and that He approved of what was taking place.

And he shall pour the rest of the blood of the bull on the base of the altar of the rededication-offering, which [is at] the entrance of The Tent of Meeting. Third, he was to take the remainder of the blood to the altar of rededication-offering in the courtyard and pour it on the base of the altar. Evidently the altar was built with a trough to catch and hold the blood (Ex. 27:5). Again Jehovah left no doubt about which altar He meant by designating that it was located at the entrance to The Tabernacle (Ex. 27:1-8; 40:6). Pouring the remainder of the blood at the base of the altar symbolized that the priest who offered the offering was pouring out his life in surrender to God. It was natural for a priest to make a new surrender of himself to God in gratitude for forgiveness for his sins. It also symbolized that he was trusting in the coming of the promised Son to suffer and die for his sins (see comments under the heading shall offer the blood, and splash the blood in Lev. 1:5 in MESSAGE 1). Pouring the blood on the base of the altar also symbolized that the forgiven priest was restored to service at the altar, to officiate again over the holy offerings. In addition, it was a reminder that the promised Son eventually was going to pay the penalty in full for his sins.

Verses 8-10. **8 And he shall lift from it all of the fat of the bull of the sin offering; the fat that covers the intestines, and all the fat that [is] on the intestines,**

9 And the two kidneys, and the fat that [is] on them, which [is[on the flanks, and he must set aside the attachment between the liver and the kidneys

10 Just as it was lifted from the head of cattle of the slaughter-offering of peace offerings; and the priest shall roast them on the altar of the rededication-offering.

And he shall lift from it all the fat of the bull, . . . just as it was lifted from the head of cattle of the slaughter-offering of the peace offering. The handling of the fat in this offering was identical to that in the slaughter-offering (see comments on Lev. 3:3-5, 9-11 in MESSAGE 1). Like the slaughter-offering, it showed that the best belonged to God. However, since the emphasis of this offering was on forgiveness rather than on fellowship, giving the best of the animal to God in this offering symbolized that, when a priest was forgiven, the best of his life belonged to God. He was to give his best to God in appreciation for forgiveness.

the head of cattle of the slaughter-offering of peace-offerings. The word translated "head of cattle" is a different word from the word translated "bull" in Leviticus 4:8 and elsewhere in the chapter. It refers to an animal of the herd of any gender. It is the appropriate word to use because a slaughter-offering could be of either gender, depending on who offered it, whereas a sin-offering of a priest could only be a bull (see comments on Lev. 3:1 in MESSAGE 1 under the heading "whether male or female.).

Critical Note

The careful use of the word "bull" when referring to the sin-offering but "head of cattle" when referring to the slaughter-offering is an example of the meticulous exactitude of the language in these chapters. It is one more piece of evidence that this book was given to Moses by Jehovah with complete accuracy and was not the result of a careless combination of several disparate documents.

Verses 11-12. **11 And the hide of the bull, and all its flesh, with its head, and with its legs, and its intestines, and its fecal matter,**

12 Even the whole bull he shall take out to the outside of the camp to a clean place, to the repository for the ashes, and he shall incinerate it. It must be incinerated on wood in the fire at the repository for the ashes.

And the hide of the bull and all its flesh, with its head, and with its legs, and its intestines, and its fecal matter, even the whole bull. These words describe the body of the animal after the blood was removed. First, the parts are described and then the whole animal is mentioned in case any parts were omitted in the listing.

he shall take out to the outside of the camp to a clean place. The use made of the body of the animal in a priest's sin-offering was different from the use of the body in a sin-offering of a ruler or of an ordinary citizen. In the case of a ruler or an ordinary citizen, the animal was given to the priest, and the priest was to use it for food. He was to eat it in the courtyard of The Tabernacle, so it was used for a holy purpose to provide for his needs and for the needs of other priests as well. However, meat from the sin-offering was to be eaten by the priests only. Thus, it was called a "holiness of holinesses" (see comments on Lev. 2:3 in MESSAGE 1 under the heading [It is] a holiness of holinesses" and on Lev. 6:26 in MESSAGE 7 under the heading It is a holiness of holinesses). Since the offering represented the worshiper's life, giving it to the priest signified that the life of the ruler or citizen was acceptable again for use in Jehovah's service. Being cleansed of sin made him useful again to God. The reason the practice was different in the case of the priest is that the priest's offering would have been given back to himself. It would have been inappropriate for a priest to benefit from his own offering. In that case, the offering would have contained no real picture of his surrendering or giving his life to God. In the case of a priest, it was necessary for a substitute to be provided that would have the same significance. The substitute was that the animal was to be taken to a clean place outside the camp.

To understand how this action could substitute for the giving of the animal to the priest, it is necessary to understand the meaning of "a clean place." "Clean" did not refer to physical cleanness but to ceremonial cleanness. The concept of ceremonial cleanness and uncleanness is mentioned here for the first time in Leviticus. Therefore, it is necessary to gain at least a basic understanding of the concept.

The Hebrew word translated "clean" is an adjective that means "pure." In a physical sense, it was used to describe items that were unmixed with any different substance. It is used 24 times in Exodus to refer to "pure gold," that is gold that did not have any other metals mixed with it (Ex. 25:11,17,24,29,31,36,38,39; 28:14,22,36; 30:3; 37:2,6,11,16,17,22,23,24,26; 39:15,25,30.) It was also used to refer to the "pure lamp stand" of The Tabernacle because the lamp stand was not made of an alloy that included gold but of gold only (Ex. 31:8; 39:37). The word was also used to refer to the "pure incense" for the altar of incense because it was unmixed with any ingredients other than perfumes and spices (Ex. 30:35; 37:29). Thus, the word translated "pure" described an object that had no foreign substances mixed with it.

The term was also used to refer to ceremonial purity and impurity. Certain persons, animals, objects, and conditions were considered to be ceremonially "pure" or "clean." Others were

considered to be ceremonially "impure" or "unclean." Not only were "unclean" persons or objects "unclean" themselves but persons or objects that came into contact with them became "unclean" also (see comments on Lev. 11:24 in MESSAGE 14). The best way to understand this concept is to recognize that ceremonial "cleanness" and "uncleanness" were symbols. If the other ceremonies of Leviticus are symbols, then "cleanness" and "uncleanness" should be understood in the same way. "Cleanness" should be understood as a symbol of moral purity. "Uncleanness" should be understood as a symbol of moral evil or impurity. The Israelites were taught to avoid all persons, animals, objects, and conditions that were ceremonially unclean. That practice taught them that some actions are morally evil by their very nature and that they should keep their lives free of those actions. On the other hand, when Israelites kept their lives ceremonially clean, they were reminded that God was pleased when they kept their lives free of inconsistent or unworthy deeds.

These facts help us understand the significance of the "clean" place outside the camp to which a priest's offering was taken. It was a place untouched by any kind of ceremonial uncleanness. As such, it was a place worthy of being used in the holy ceremonies of Israel's worship. The priest's offering was not taken there to show that it represented something bad or something to be disposed of. It did not represent sins being removed from the priest's life. Since taking the animal to a clean place was a substitute for a ruler's or an ordinary citizen's giving his offering to the priests as a service to God, taking the priest's offering there must have meant that the priest's life was being committed again to God's service. It represented the priests' surrendered life and Jehovah's restoration of his life to holy service. Taking the body of the priest's sin-offering to a clean place outside the camp was even more significant in God's service than giving to the priests the body of a ruler's sin-offering or of an ordinary citizen's sin-offering.

to the repository of the ashes. The body of the priest's sin-offering was not to be taken to just any clean place outside the camp. It was to be taken to the repository where ashes from the altar were spread out when they were carried away from The Tabernacle by the priests.

The word translated "repository" is a noun that is based on a root that means "to pour out."[4] It was a place where the ashes were poured out of a container in which they were placed when they were scraped out of the altar. When the fire-offerings had been reduced to ashes, they were still holy. They were the distilled essence of everything the offering stood for. The place to which they were taken was not just a dumping place. It was a holy repository designed to receive them as a part of the offering ceremony (see comments on Leviticus 6:10-11 in MESSAGE 5). Therefore, taking the body of the priest's sin-offering there was also an important part of that ceremony. It symbolized the priest's restoration to God's holy service after his sin was forgiven.

It is instructive to notice that everything left of the animal after the blood was offered was taken to the repository, including its head, legs, intestine, and even the fecal matter left in its intestines. None of it was unfit to be devoted to Jehovah and used in His service. Once a priest was forgiven, everything in his life was acceptable and useful to God. No matter how unworthy or repulsive some actions of his life may have seemed to be, God would receive it and use it all after he was forgiven. This practice must have been a blessed assurance again and again to repentant priests, ashamed and burdened over their failures.

And he shall incinerate it. The animal was to be disposed of with fire, but "burning" does not give a proper understanding of how it was to be handled. Comments on Leviticus 1:9 describe the difference between two Hebrew words that are

[4] This word is usually translated by some phrase like "where the ashes are poured out." This translation gives an accurate description of the kind of place it was, but it is an inexact rendering of the word. The translation of MSG is even more unsatisfactory. It uses "where the ashes are dumped." That translation makes it sound as if the ashes were unceremoniously dumped out to get rid of them. HCSB does better by using the translation "ash heap"; however, that translation also leaves the impression that the ashes were just an insignificant heap of refuse.

usually translated "burn" in English versions. One describes consuming with a blazing flame; the other describes roasting with controlled heat. (see comments on Lev. 1:9 in MESSAGE 1 under the heading and the priest shall roast all on the altar). The word used in this verse is still a third word for using fire. It also is usually translated "burn" in English versions. Translating all three words with one English word does not convey the difference in the way fire was to be used on different occasions. The word in this verse was used for firing bricks (Gen. 11:3), for Moses' melting the Golden Calf before he ground it into powder (Ex. 32:20), for Jehu's melting down metal idols (2 Kings 10:26), for Josiah's doing the same (2 Kings 23:4,6), for cremating children in honor of false gods (2 Kings 17:31; Jer. 7:31; 19:5), and for torching a city in war, which would leave the buildings charred but not totally consumed (2 Kings 25:9; Jer. 32:29; 34:2). The word describes not fire to be used to destroy the object but fire controlled to achieve a specific purpose. The word "incinerate" is used as a translation in this verse in an effort to get close to the true meaning. The word indicates that the animal was not to be burned up in disrespect but honorably charred over an open fire and gradually reduced to ashes, which were then still considered to be holy. Thus, it became like the ashes from the altar, which were periodically carried away from the altar and spread out in the same place. Both were to be given high respect because of their place in the holy ceremonies of The Tabernacle.

It must be incinerated on wood in the fire at the repository for the ashes. The verse ends with restating these instructions in a way that emphasizes that this handling of the major part of the animal was a required part of the ceremony, not a incidental action of no significance.

(2) Offered by the whole congregation (4:13-21)

Verses 13-14. **13 ¶ And if the whole assembly of Israel sins by mistake, whether the word (deed) was hidden from the eyes of the assembly so that it did something against any of the commandments of Jehovah that should not be done, and [thus[offended,**

14 Or whether the sin that they sinned was known to it, then the assembly shall offer a son of a herd for a sin-offering, and they shall bring it to the face of The Tent of Meeting.

And if the whole assembly of Israel. These verses begin a description of a second kind of sin-offering, one offered for a sin committed by the whole assembly. The word translated "assembly" means a group gathered by appointment, that is, at an appointed time or place. In the time of Leviticus, the whole nation was traveling together and at times appeared before Jehovah as one assembled group (for an example see Ex. 19:10-25). While Israel was at Sinai, Jehovah told the Israelites to all appear before Him each year to commemorate their escape by observing the Feast of the Passover (Ex. 12:14-20; 13:5-10). Later he added two other feast days during which all Israelites were to gather at an appointed place (Ex. 34:22-23; Deut. 16:16-17). These feast days were gatherings of the whole assembly at times and at a place that Jehovah appointed to them. Such a gatherings evidently was what was meant by the phrase "the great assembly" or "the great congregation" (1 Kings 8:65; Ps. 22:25; 35:18; 40:9,10). Speaking of "the whole assembly of Israel" or "the great assembly," which included all the Israelites, at least implied the possibility of smaller assemblies that included only portions of them. So when Jehovah spoke of "the whole assembly," He was speaking of the whole nation.[5]

[5] The Septuagint translation of the Hebrew Bible (the Old Testament) into Greek translated this word as "*synagogue*" in Exodus and as "*ecclesia*" in Kings and Psalms. The two words had virtually the same meaning. A "*synagogue*" was a gathering at an appointed time and place. An "*ecclesia*" was a group called together for a particular purpose. Both words are accurate translations of the Hebrew word that meant "*assembly*." When the Israelites began congregational worship in their communities, they called their gatherings "*synagogues.*" The significance was that their community synagogues were local portions of the "great synagogue." When Christians began to hold their worship services separately from Jews, they conducted their services in much the same way that the Jews did in their synagogues. However, to identify their gatherings as distinctively Christian in nature, they called them "*ecclesias.*" This word had the same meaning as "synagogue," but the use of this different wsord distinguished their gathering from the same type of Jewish gatherings. *"Ecclesia"* is generally translated into English as "church." The idea of gathering for worship and service in synagogues and churches goes all the way back to Exodus.

Nations can depart from God's commands, as well as individuals. Nations also receive punishment for their sins; and nations can be forgiven when they repent. So, provision was made for a symbolic offering that pictured the whole nation of Israel's confessing its sins and receiving forgiveness.

sins by mistake. This phrase is one word in Hebrew. It is a verb and is used here for the first time in Leviticus. It is based on the same root as the noun in Leviticus 1:3 that means "by mistake." The verb means "to commit error," "to swerve" or "to go astray." Though the word has generally been translated "through ignorance," it contains nothing that can be connected with the idea of ignorance. That idea comes from misunderstanding the noun used in verse 2. That noun is correctly understood to mean "by mistake," not "by ignorance" (see comments on Lev. 4:2 above under the heading by mistake). The verb in this verse describes sin as an act that swerves away from the straight path. It can be translated "goes astray" or "sins by mistake."

whether the word (deed) was hidden from the eyes of the assembly when it did something against any of the commandments of Jehovah that should not be done. Misunderstanding what was meant by a "sin of mistake" has led to inaccurate translations of this verse in all English translations. The translation has to be forced and twisted to make it say what the versions state. The correct translation of this portion of the verse shows that the congregation could have been unaware that its action was sinful, but the next verse shows that it could have known that its action was a sin. In either case, the sin was serious and needed to be dealt with.

And [thus] offended. These words translate a verb that is used here for the first time in the Bible. It is translated by KJV as "to be guilty" in Leviticus 4:13,22,27: 5:2,3,4,5,17; 6:4; Numbers 5:6; Judges 21:22; however, KJV translates it as "to trespass" in Leviticus 26:40: Deuteronomy 32:51; 2 Chronicles 26:18; 28:22; 29:6; 30:7; Ezra 10:2; Ezekiel 14:13; 17:20; 18:24; 39:23,26; Daniel 9:7 and as "to offend" in Jeremiah 2:3; 50:7; Ezekiel 25:12; Hosea 4:15; 13:1; Habakkuk 1:11. In every instance, where KJV translates the verb to mean guilt, it can just as readily be translated to mean the offense itself, rather than the guilt that resulted from the offense. On the other hand, in every instance where it translates the verb to mean "offense," it cannot mean "guilt." This fact raises the strong suspicion that it was never meant to mean "to be guilty." The translation "and offends" fits the sense of the sentence better. It means that the congregation's action was an offense, even if the assembly was unaware of the sinfulness of its action. The assembly should have known, because God had made His commandments clear and definite, so if they neglected learning the commandments they still offended if they broke them..

Or whether the sin that they sinned was known to it**.** The verb translated "was known" is in the perfect state and cannot mean "becomes known," or equivalent words, as all English versions translate it. This clause means that, the sin-offering applied even if the congregation knew it was sinning when it committed the offense. Whether aware or unaware, the assembly needed to repent and turn away from its sin. Then Jehovah would forgive.

then the congregation shall offer a son of a herd for a sin-offering, and they shall bring it to the face of The Tent of Meeting. The animal to be offered as a sin-offering by the nation was to be "a son of the herd," meaning a bull. It specifies gender but not age. The animal was the same as that to be offered by a priest. The priest and the nation were equal in importance in the service of Jehovah. The nation of Israel was chosen for special service to Jehovah as a nation, while the priests were chosen for special service as individuals. In importance to Jehovah's work, they ranked ahead of rulers and ordinary citizens. Thus, the finest, most expensive, most impressive offering was required for the nation, as it was required for the priests (see comments on Lev. 4:3 under the heading a pristine bull).

In a later message recorded in Numbers 15:24, Jehovah specified that a sin-offering for the congregation could consist of a "male goat of the goats" if it accompanied a bull rededication-

offering. This provision was allowed because of the close connection in meaning between the rededication-offering and the sin-offering (see comments on Lev. 4:7-9 in this MESSAGE and on Lev. 16:24 in MESSAGE 20). After a bull was offered as a rededication-offering, another bull was not required for a sin-offering. A less expensive male goat could suffice. This provision explains the offering of a male goat in Leviticus 9:3,15; 16:5,7,9,10,15,18; 23:19; Numbers 28:15,22; 29:5, 11,16,19,22,25,28,31,34,38.

Verse 15. **And the elders of the assembly shall press their hands on the head of the bull at Jehovah's face, and he shall kill the bull at Jehovah's face.**

And the elders of the assembly shall press their hands on the head of the bull at Jehovah's face. The bull was to be provided by the whole nation, but the ritual of pressing the hands on the head of the bull was to be performed by the elders of the nation. "Elders" were the tribal, clan, and family leaders in Israel (see INTRODUCTION TO SECTION II). Because they were the leaders, they represented the whole nation when they pressed their hands on the head of the bull.

And he shall kill the bull at Jehovah's face. Verse 4 says that the priest who offered a sin-offering was to kill the animal himself. This verse uses the singular in describing who should kill the bull in the case of a sin-offering for the whole assembly. It might refer to one of the elders or to the officiating priest. Either way, the significance was the same (see comments on Lev. 1:5 in MESSAGE 1 under the heading "And he shall kill the bull").

Verses 16-18. **16 And the anointed priest shall bring [some] of the bull's blood to The Tent of Meeting:**

17 And the priest shall dip his finger of the blood, and he shall splatter [it] seven times at Jehovah's face, at the face of the veil.

18 And he shall put [some] of the blood on the horns of the altar that [is] at Jehovah's face, which is inside The Tent of Meeting, and he shall pour out all the blood at the base of the altar of the rededication-offering, which *is* [at] the entrance to The Tent of Meeting.

The blood was to be handled in the same way as in a sin-offering of a priest (see comments on Leviticus 4:5-7), and the symbolism was the same. (See comments on Leviticus 4:3 under the heading If the anointed priest.) Carrying the blood inside The Tabernacle showed that Israel as a nation was appointed to serve in special nearness to God, even as the priests were, and that forgiveness restored them to worthiness for that place of service.

Verse 19. **19 And he shall take all is fat from it, and he shall roast [it] on the altar.**

20a And he shall do with the bull as he did with the bull for a sin-offering.

All of the fat was to be removed from the bull and roasted on the altar, which was the same procedure to be used with the sin-offering of a priest. The significance was also the same (see comments on Lev. 4:8-10 above).

Verse 20b. **Thus the priest shall do with it, and he shall cover over them, and it shall be forgiven to them.**

This statement applies to all the previous instructions concerning this offering. The result would be that the people in the nation would be covered to protect them from their sins (see comments on Leviticus 1:4 in MESSAGE 1 under the heading to cover over him). Covering the nation from its sins through the sin-offering meant that the nation's sins were forgiven and the nation was restored to full usefulness in Jehovah's service. This restoration would take place when the people as a whole surrendered themselves anew to God. The words, "the priest shall cover over them," should be understood in a symbolic sense, like the words of Jesus, "I am the door," "This is my body," and "Except a man eat of my body . . . ." The surrendered life brought the covering. The offering symbolized it.

Verse 21. **And he shall carry forth the bull outside the camp, and he shall incinerate it**

as he incinerated the first bull. It is a sin-offering for the assembly.

And he shall carry forth the bull outside the camp, and he shall incinerate it as he incinerated the first bull. The meat, hide, head, legs, and intestines of the animal were to be handled in the same manner as in the sin-offering of a priest, for the same reason. The priests were involved in the sin of the nation, and they were included in an offering made by the nation. Since the offering was partly their own, it was inappropriate for them to receive benefit from it. Therefore, the animal was to be taken outside the camp and reduced to ashes in the same manner as a sin-offering of a priest. As in the sin-offering of a priest, disposing of the animal in a clean place signified that the nation was restored to worthiness for service to Jehovah (see comments on Leviticus 4:11-12 above).

It [is] a sin offering for the assembly. These words mean that the instructions that preceded defined how a sin-offering for the congregation was to be conducted.

(3) Offered by a ruler (4:22-26)

Verses 22-23. **22 ¶ When a ruler sins, whether he has done something by mistake against any of the commandments of Jehovah his God that should not be done, and [thus] has offended,**

23 Or if his sin by which he sinned was known by him, then he shall bring his offering, [which shall be] a buck of the goats, a pristine male.

When a ruler sins. These verses introduce a third type of sin-offering, an offering made by a ruler. The word translated "ruler" here is a different word from the word translated "elder" in verse 15. It included all kinds and ranks of civil rulers, judges as well as elders (see INTRODUCTION TO SECTION II). As the sin-offering for a priest applied to all classes of priests, just so the sin-offering for a ruler applied to all classes of rulers.

whether he has done something by mistake against any of the commandments of Jehovah his God that should not be done, and [thus] has offended. For an explanation of sinning "by mistake," see comments on verses 2 above under the heading by mistake and on verse 13 under the heading sins by mistake. Even if the ruler's sin was done out of weakness without intending to rebel against God, it was serious and needed to be repented of and forgiven.

Of if he sin by which he sinned was known to him. Even if the ruler knew better than to do what he did, he could be forgiven if he repented.

he shall bring his offering, [which shall consist of] a buck of the goats, a pristine male. A sin-offering for a ruler was to consist of a male goat (see comments on Lev. 4:3 under the heading "a pristine bull" concerning the significance of the male goat). The word was not used to refer to a goat of a certain age, but it specified a male goat (see comments on Lev. 1:5 above under the heading "and he shall kill the bullock concerning the age of animals used as offerings). Later references in the Pentateuch to sin-offerings of rulers all use these same words (Num. 7:16,22,28,34,40,46,52,58,64, 70,76,82,87).

Verse 24. **And he shall press his hand on the head of the goat, and he shall kill it in the place where they kill the rededication-offering at Jehovah's face.**

And he shall press his hand on the head of the goat, and he shall kill it in the place where they kill the rededication-offering. These words describe elements in the sin-offering of a ruler that are identical in form and symbolism to those in the sin-offering of a priest (see comments on Lev. 4: 4 in this MESSAGE). It was also identical in form and symbolism to a rededication-offering (see comments on Lev. 1:4 in MESSAGE 1). In spite of its resemblance to a rededication-offering, it was still a sin-offering. The same symbols could be used in both offerings, but the overall significance of each offering was different.

It is a sin-offering. The offering of a male goat by a ruler was just as much a sin-offering as

the offering of a bull by a priest or by the whole assembly.

Verse 25. **And the priest shall take some of the blood of the sin-offering on his finger, and he shall smear [it] on the horns of the altar of rededication offering, and he shall pour out [the rest of] its blood at the base of the altar of rededication-offering.**

The handling of the blood was different in the sin-offering of a ruler from that in the sin-offering of a priest or of the whole nation, though it symbolized the same truths. Instead of being taken into The Tabernacle, the blood was to be taken directly to the altar of rededication-offering. Some of it was to be smeared on the horns of that altar, and the remainder was to be poured into the trough at the base of the altar. The blood still symbolized that the life of the worshiper was restored to usefulness in service to Jehovah. The blood of the sin-offering of a priest and of the whole congregation was taken into The Tabernacle to show that they were restored to their places of service in special nearness to Jehovah. The task of the ruler did not have the same nearness to Jehovah, but it was still service to Him. Thus, the blood of his offering was not taken into The Tabernacle, but it was taken to the altar of rededication-offering, which was in front of The Tabernacle.

The ceremony of the blood in a sin-offering for a ruler was also slightly different from the way the blood was to be handled in a rededication-offering (see comments on Lev. 1:5 in MESSAGE 1). In a rededication-offering all of the blood was poured around the sides of the altar. In a sin-offering, some of the blood was smeared on the horns of the altar, and the remainder was poured around the sides of the altar. Horns represented power, because an animal used its horns as a powerful weapon to defend itself or to fight against a threat. The horns on the altar symbolized that powerful ceremonies took place there. The smearing of some of the blood of a sin-offering on the horns of the altar symbolized that sin was being removed from the ruler's life by the power of God. No other power is great enough to remove it. The smearing of the blood not only showed that the ruler was surrendering his life to God but also that he was trusting the power of the promised Son to come and pay for his sins. Even though the sins symbolized by the sin-offering were sins committed by a believer because of weakness, rather than the pardon of the penalty for the sins of a lost person, the power and sacrifice of the coming Son to pay for his sins was just as necessary as the pardon that came to him when he first became a believer.

Verse 26. **And he shall roast all of its fat on the altar, like the fat of the slaughter-offering of peace-offerings, and the priest shall cover over him from his sin, and it shall be forgiven him.**

And he shall roast all of its fat on the altar, like the fat of the slaughter-offering of peace-offerings. The fat was handled in the same manner as in other sin-offerings, with the same significance (see comments on Lev. 4:8-10 above). This verse, however, emphasizes that the handling of the fat was also the same as that in a slaughter-offering of peace-offerings (concerning the name of this offering, see comments on Lev. 3:1 in MESSAGE 1 under the heading "a slaughter-offering of peace offerings." Again, some elements of the sin-offering were the same as in other offerings, but the overall meaning of the sin-offering was different from the others.

No instruction is given concerning what was to be done with the remainder of the animal. Ordinarily one would suppose that it was to be taken outside the camp and cremated as in the offerings for a priest and for the whole congregation. However, Leviticus 6:26 says that it was to be given to the officiating priest, showing that after the worshiper was forgiven his life was acceptable for use in God's service (see comments on Lev. 4:11-12 above).

And the priest shall cover over him from his sin, and it shall be forgiven him. See comments on Leviticus 1:4 under the heading to cover over him concerning the meaning of "covering" a person from sins.. It means a protective covering was placed over him. The purpose of the sin-offering is described here more fully than before. The idea is not that his sins were covered but that the sinner

was covered and hidden from his sins, so that they could plague or harm him no longer.

Note that the covering is not mentioned in connection with the blood but in connection with the fat, showing that the surrender of his whole life was involved in his repentance for his sins and that the giving of whole life of the promised Son was going to be involved in paying for his sins. Actually, the covering was connected with the whole offering, not just any one part of it. The offering was a symbol of that covering, not the means by which the covering was obtained. The covering came from his repentance and the promise of the coming Son to pay the price for his sins. The offering did not provide his forgiveness. It symbolize the repentance of the worship and the suffering of the coming Son that did provide his forgiveness..

(4) Offered by an ordinary citizen (4:27-5:13)

(a) Of a doe of the goats (4:27-31)

Verses 27-28. **27 ¶ And if any one of the ordinary citizens sins by mistake, by doing something [against] one of the commandments of Jehovah that should not be done, and [thus] offends;**

28 Or if his sin that he sinned was known to him, then he shall bring his offering, a doe of the goats, a pristine female, for his sin that he sinned.

And if any one of the ordinary citizens sins. These verses begin to describe a fourth type of sin-offering, that is, a sin-offering for an ordinary citizen. This type offering was more complicated, in that it had four sub-types. The distinction of each sub-type was in the offering that was offered, not in the procedure or the symbolism. The purpose was to bring the sin-offering within the financial means of every Israelite. The words translated "ordinary citizens" means literally "the people of the land." It did not have the disparaging implications of the English term "common man," which is the way the words have traditionally been translated in English translations. "Ordinary citizens" conveys the same idea without the derogatory connotations.

by mistake by doing something [against] one of the commandments of Jehovah that should not to done, and [thus] offends; Or if his sin that he sinned was known to him. The meaning of these words is the same as with verses 2-3 and 13-14 in this same chapter (see comments on those verses above). The sin referred to is a sin by mistake or weakness, whether or not the person knew it was a sin at the time he committed it.

then he shall bring his offering, a doe of the goals, a pristine female, for his sin that he sinned. The same word is used for the animal in this verse that was used in verse 23, except that here it is feminine in form. The word does not signify anything concerning the age of the animal; however, verse 32 shows that, when a sheep was offered, it was to be a young animal. By analogy, it would seem that a young animal was to be used also in the case of a goat. This is confirmed by Numbers 15:27, where instructions are given concerning the observance of this offering after the settling of the Israelites in their land. In that verse, a one-year-old goat is specified. The requirement for a female animal and a young animal added to the picture that an ordinary citizen could offer an offering of lesser value than was required for a priest or for the whole nation. (See comments on Lev. 4:3 above under the heading a pristine bull).

Verses 29-31. **29 And he shall press his hand on the head of the sin-offering, and he shall kill the sin-offering in the place of the rededication-offering.**

30 And the priest shall take some of the blood on his finger, and he shall put [it] on the horns of the altar of rededication-offering, and shall pour out all of [the rest of] the blood on the base of the altar.

31 And he shall take away all of its fat, like the fat [is] taken away from the slaughter-offering of peace-offerings; and the priest shall roast [it] on the altar for a soothing fragrance to Jehovah, and the priest shall cover over him, and it shall be forgiven him.

The form and symbolism of the sin-offering for an ordinary citizen was the same as that for a ruler (see comments on Lev. 4:24-26 above). The additional thought is given here that the fat of the sin-offering that was roasted on the altar was a soothing fragrance to Jehovah, just like the portions of other offerings that were roasted on the altar (see comments on Lev. 1:9 in MESSAGE 1 under the heading a soothing fragrance to Jehovah).

(b) Of a lamb (4:32-35)

Verses 32-35. **32 And if he brings a lamb as his offering for a sin-offering, he must bring a pristine female.**

33 And he shall press his hand on the head of the sin-offering, and he shall kill it as a sin offering in the place where they kill the rededication-offering.

34 And the priest shall take some of the blood of the sin-offering on his finger, and he shall put [it] on the horns of the altar of rededication-offering, and shall pour out all the [rest of its] blood on the base of the altar:

35 And he shall take away all of its fat, like the fat of the lamb [is] taken away from the slaughter-offering of the peace-offerings; and the priest shall roast them on the altar, like [the other] fire-offerings to Jehovah: and the priest shall cover over him for his sin that he sinned, and it shall be forgiven him.

These verses describe a second sub-type of the sin-offering for an ordinary citizen. It consisted of offering a "lamb," which is further defined as "a pristine female." The word translated "lamb" means a young sheep. The significance of the female animal is explained in comments on Leviticus 4:3, and the significance a young animal is explained in comments on Leviticus 4:28. The reason that instructions for a lamb offering were given separately from instructions for a goat offering was to describe the handling of the fatty tail of a lamb, which a goat did not have. Because of the lamb's fatty tail, the fat of a sin-offering of a lamb was handled in the same way as the fat of a sheep used as a slaughter-offering (see comments on Lev. 3:9-11 in MESSAGE 1). Otherwise, the form and symbolism of the offering of a lamb was the same as that of a goat.

CHAPTER 5

(c) Examples of occasions when a sin-offering could be offered (5:1-6)

Verse 1. **And if a person sins, in that he hears an oath spoken, and he [was] a witness [to what was said], whether he saw it or knew about it, if he does not tell [it], then he shall bear his iniquity.**

And if a person sins, in that he hears an oath spoken and he [was] a witness [to what was said] whether he saw it or knew about it. This verse begins a section that describes examples of occasions when a sin-offering should be offered. They should not be considered to be the only occasions when a sin-offering could be offered, but to be examples of such occasions. This first example was the sin of withholding information about the wrongdoing of another. The wrongdoing seems to be that the person swore to a commitment and then did not keep his commitment. If someone heard or knew for sure about the broken commitment and did not tell about it, he was guilty of sin. Helping an offender hide his sin is equivalent to participating in the deed. This sin was not a sin of ignorance, because he had to know that making an oat and not keeping it was wrong to want to hide it. It is an example of the kind of sin of weakness that a sincere follower of Jehovah might be guilty of committing. It was not rebellion, but it was sin. It did not need to be excused, but it did need to be confessed and forgiven.

then he shall bear. "Bear his iniquity" is an expression that is used here for the first time in Leviticus, though it was used in two very instructive passages in Exodus 28:38 and Exodus 28:43. It means that the weight of the wrong-doing was on the person who hid the wrongdoing. A person who committed this offense bore the weight of guilt even though he did not commit the deed himself, because he helped the sinner hide his sin. Unless forgiven, he would have to face the required punishment.

his iniquity. The word translated "iniquity" is another Hebrew word for "sin," used here for the

first time in Leviticus. It means "crookedness." To hide or protect another person's wrong is a crooked deed. It is sin.

Verse 2. **Or a person who touches any unclean word (object), whether a carcass of an unclean living being or a carcass of unclean livestock or a carcass of an unclean swarmer, even [if] it was hidden from him that it [was] unclean, then he shall have offended.**

If a person touches an unclean word (object).. The second example of a sin for which a sin-offering could be offered was breaking one of the ceremonial regulations concerning clean and unclean creatures. For an introduction to the concept of clean and unclean, see comments on Leviticus 4:11-12 in this MESSAGE under the heading he shall take out to the outside of the camp to a clean place. Complete instructions concerning clean and unclean creatures and conditions are given in Leviticus 11-15, with emphasis on unclean animals, water creatures, flying creatures, and swarmers in Leviticus 11.

The Israelites used the word "word" with a great variety of meanings. Here it refers to any kind of animal life.

whether a carcass of an unclean living being . The word translated "living being" is used here for the first time in Leviticus, though it was used 16 times in Genesis and twice in Exodus (Ex. 23:11,29). This term was used to refer to all creatures that possess animal life.

or a carcass of unclean livestock. The word translated "livestock" refers to domestic animals (see comments on 1:2 in MESSAGE 1 under the heading "from the livestock."

or a carcass of an unclean swarmer. The word translated "swarmer" is used here for the first time in Leviticus. It is a noun derived from a root that means "to swarm" or "to gather in groups." The Israelites did not classify animals in the same way that we do today. We classify them by structure, but the Israelites classified them by their habits. Domestic animals were animals that by nature tended to be submissive and subject to guidance. Wild animals were animals that were by nature hostile and dangerous. Swarmers were animals that lived or traveled in groups. They could be fish, birds, insects, or rodents, even wolves or coyotes. We identify them as a school of fish, a flock of birds, a swarm of insects, a nest of mice, and a pack of wolves.

even [if] it was hidden from him. This clause means that ignoring clean and unclean regulations was wrong only if the offender did not know it was wrong. Certainly his actions would have been even more offensive if he knew better, but it was an offense even if he was not aware of its uncleanness. He was obligated to know Jehovah's commands and to obey them. The identical words that are translated "Even [if] it was hidden from him" in this verse are found in the next two verses, except that in those verses they are followed by "or whether he knew it." If the deed was an offense in either case in those instances, the same must have been true in this instance. This expression adds to our understanding that sins of ignorance are not the subject of this chapter, but sins of weakness.

that it [was] unclean. The word translated "unclean" is used here for the first time in Leviticus. It means "dirty," and was not built on the same root as the word translated "clean" (see comments on Lev. 5:12 in this MESSAGE). It was never used to refer to physical dirtiness. It could be used for moral dirtiness (Gen. 34:5,13,27), but usually it was used to refer to ceremonial dirtiness. Certain creatures and conditions were classified by Jehovah as ceremonially dirty and were used by Him as symbols of sin. Those creatures and conditions were not evil in themselves. Jehovah chose them as symbols. The purpose was to be a constant reminder to the Israelites that Jehovah's people were always to avoid sin. The person who did not avoid those symbols became unclean himself, that is, he also became a symbol of sinfulness. This practice taught that sin easily spreads from one person to another. To stay free of sin, a person needs to avoid close contact or companionship with sinners and temptation.

Jehovah's regulations concerning clean and unclean animals were given to Moses in a later message that is recorded in Leviticus 11 (see

comments in on that chapter MESSAGE 14); however, the distinctions between clean and unclean had long been known to Jehovah worshippers, as is evidenced by Genesis 7:2,8; 8:20. This sin was against regulations that dealt with ceremonial misconduct.

Then he shall have offended. The person who did not avoid symbols of sin, not only became unclean. He also became an actual sinner. The word translated "shall have offended" is the word that is usually translated "guilty" in English translations. It is better translated "to deviate" or "to offend" (see comments on Lev. 4:13 above under the heading "and [thus] offended."). In this verse, it is in the perfect state, which shows emphasis. It emphasizes that the person who touched an unclean animal would become more than just unclean. He shall have committed a deviation, an offense, an evil deed. Two reasons can be cited as to why such ceremonial misconduct was a sin. First, unclean animals symbolized sinful deeds. If a person failed to avoid the symbol of sin, he showed that he also was not inclined to avoid sin itself. Such an unconcerned attitude toward the symbols of sin revealed an attitude that was a sin in itself. Second, the practice of these symbols was commanded by God. To ignore them was to disobey God, to defy His authority, which certainly is sin. However, such a sin was not rebellion. It was a kind of sin that could afflict the life of a sincere Jehovah worshiper. Though not rebellion, it was serious. The offender needed to repent of it (see comments on Lev. 11:25 in MESSAGE 14).

Verse 3. **Or if he touches an uncleanness of a man, according to any kind of uncleanness by which he may become unclean, whether it was hidden from him or whether he knew [it], he shall have offended.**

Translators have struggled to translate this verse consistently with their concept that this chapter is talking about sins of ignorance. They either have translated it with words similar to "when he becomes aware [of it]" or with words similar to "and [later] he recognizes [it]." The first attempt at translation is not legitimate, because the state of the verb is perfect and cannot mean action in progress. The second attempt requires the addition of a word similar to "later," which is unnecessary and changes the meaning of what the verse actually says. The offense was not meant to apply only when the sinner was unaware of his action. It was meant to declare that the sinner had committed an offense whether he knew about it or not. He was expected to know God's commands and obey them. If he ignored them, he had committed an offense.

"This verse refers to a second type of uncleanness, that is, a person who had an unclean condition. Both touching the carcass of an unclean animal and touching an unclean person were symbols of sin. They were explained to Moses in detail in later messages that are recorded in Leviticus 12:1-14:32 and 15:1-33 (see comments on MESSAGES 15, 16, 17, 19). This sin was essentially the same as the preceding one. It just dealt with another type of uncleanness.

Verse 4. **Or if a person swears by speaking rashly with [his] lips, [either] to do evil or to do good, according to any way that the man might speak rashly with an oath, whether it was hidden from him or whether he knew it, he shall have offended according to any one of these [ways].**

This verse describes a fourth example of a sin for which a person could offer a sin-offering. This sin is a moral evil committed by the person himself. Specifically, it refers to making an oath without being that what he said was true. The oath could be about some action another person had taken without being sure of the truth of his statement. Or it could be about making an oath to perform some deed without being sure he was able carry out his promise. The motive for his rash speech did not make any difference. Whether he did it to try to hurt someone or to try to help someone, he spoke falsely and misled others. And whether he knew he was speaking falsely or not, his thoughtless speech deceived others. It was a form of lying. He should have had better control over his statements. He should not have spoken without being sure of what he was saying. His rash oath was an offense against God and men. Still, it was the kind of sin a sincere Jehovah worshiper could commit out of emotion without intending to rebel

against God. It was not a sin of ignorance or rebellion, but a sin of weakness.

Verse 5. **And it shall be, if he has offended in any one of these [ways], that he shall confess that he sinned by [doing] it.**

If someone offended in any one of the four examples, he was to confess that he had sinned. The sinner was not commanded to confess that the act was a sin, as if he were free to decide if it was sinful or not. God had determined that it was sinful. The sinner was to confess that he had done what God had forbidden him to do. He was to confess that he was a sinner. The fact that his confession was to come before he offered a sin-offering makes it clear that the worshiper had to have had a heart experience prior to presenting his sin-offering. Forgiveness was not obtained from the performance of the ceremony but from heart confession and repentance. The offering expressed outwardly what the worshiper felt in his heart.

Verse 6. **Then he shall bring his offense to Jehovah according to his sin that he sinned, [by] a female from the flock, [either] a ewe lamb or a doe of the goats, as a sin-offering; and the priest shall cover over him from his sin.**

Then he shall bring his offense to Jehovah The word translated "offense" is a noun based on the same root as the verb in Leviticus 4:13; 5:2,3,4,5. The verb means "to offend," and the noun is best translated "offense."

Translators and interpreters have struggled hard to find the right understanding of this word. Sometimes they have understood it to mean "guilt," but that view is extremely weak (see comments on Lev. 4:13 above under the heading "[and [thus] offended and on Lev. 5:2 above under the heading "Then he shall have offended). Others have understood it to mean "trespass offering" or "guilt offering" in this verse, but that view has led to much confusion between two different kinds of offerings: sin-offerings and offense-offerings. [6]

In Leviticus 5:15,16,18,19; 6:6; 7:1,7, this word is used as the name of the fifth type of fire-offering. In those verses, KJV properly translates it as "trespass offering," though this writing will suggest that a better translation would be "offense-offering." Since the word can mean either "offense" or "offense-offering," translators and interpreters must determine what meaning is intended in this verse. If it is understood to mean "offense-offering" or "trespass offering" in this verse, as KJV does, it is necessary to take one of two positions, both of which are untenable.

The first possibility is that the description of the fifth type of fire-offering begins in Leviticus 5:1 instead of Leviticus 5:14. Thus, Leviticus 5:1-13 would contain descriptions of offense-offerings, instead of descriptions of sin-offerings. Four strong reasons for rejecting that conclusion are given in paragraph 3 of the Critical Note at the end of this MESSAGE.

The second possibility is that the name "trespass offering" or "offense-offering" is used to refer to two different types of offerings. It would be an alternate name for "sin-offering" in this verse and the name of the fifth type of fire-offering in Leviticus 5. This possibility is most unlikely, because the book of Leviticus is too precise in its use of words to create that kind of confusion. For these two reasons, the translation "trespass-offering" or "offense-offering" in this verse should be rejected.

On the other hand, translating this word as trespass" or "offense" and understanding it to refer to a sin rather than to an offering for sin is strongly supported by the fact that the same wording occurs in verse 7 in slightly abbreviated form. There the wording must be twisted and added to if the rendering "offense-offering" is used. It seems best

[6] KJV translates the noun as "guiltiness" in Genesis 26:10, but the meaning is equally clear if it is translated as "offense." In all other references where it occurs, KJV translates the noun as "trespass" (Lev. 22:16; 1 Chr. 21:3; 24:18; 28:13; Ezra 9:6,7,13,15:10:10.) In those passages, ASV, RSV, SGV, NIV, and HCSB most often translate the word as "guilt," but none of them translate it to mean an offering in those verses. Clearly all translations recognize that the word can mean and often does mean a "trespass" or an "offense. It is another word for sin.

to conclude that this verse refers to the offense rather than to the offering.[7]

The word translated "shall bring" means "to bring" or "to cause to come." It is not the word "offer," meaning "to offer an offering on the altar." It means that a sinner is to take his sin to God. The proper place to bring our sins is to God. He alone can forgive them. When properly translated, this clause shows that the word translated "sin" and the word translated "offense" are synonyms. No significant difference in meaning exists between the two words.

"Trespass" and "trespass offering" are both accurate renderings for this Hebrew word. The translation must be determined by the context. However, "offense" and "offense-offering" are better translations than "trespass" and "trespass-offering" for two reasons: (1) The word "trespass" does not have an adjective form, as the Hebrew word does, and as the English word "offense" does ("offensive"). This fact contributes to the inaccurate translation "guilty" in Leviticus 5:2,3,4,5 in KJV and in other versions. (2) The English verb "to trespass" does not have as versatile a use as the Hebrew word does, and as the English verb "to offend" does. Therefore, the translations "to offend," "offense," "offensive" and "offense-offering" will be used in this writing.

[by] female of the flock, [either] a ewe lamb or a doe of the goats, for a sin offering; and the priest shall cover over him from his sin. He was to take his sin to Jehovah by offering a sin-offering The sin-offering symbolized the repentance he felt in his heart. These words briefly summarize the main features of the sin-offering, which already have been examined and explained (see comments on Lev. 4:27-35 above).

In summation, four kinds of sin have been mentioned for which a sin-offering could be offered: hiding another person's sin, ignoring God's commands about touching an unclean animal, ignoring God's commands about touching a person's unclean condition, and making an oath without being sure what he said was true. These offenses were examples. Other similar sins could be cited as reasons for offering a sin-offering. All of the cited examples are sins that the sinner could not correct. He could only ask for forgiveness. However, if the person could correct or make up for the harm he did with his sin, he was to make restitution and offer an offense-offering, which is described in Leviticus 5:14-6::7b).

(d) Of birds (5:7-10)

Verse 7. **And if his hand does not extend [enough] to bring one from the flock, then he shall bring to Jehovah his offense that he sinned, [by offering] two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, to Jehovah, one for a sin offering, and the other for a rededication-offering.**

And if his hand does not extend [enough] to bring one from the flock. These words introduce a third sub-type of the sin-offering for an ordinary citizen. The text clearly states that this sub-type was provided for persons whose "hand did not extend [enough] to bring one from the flock." The idiom "extends" is not used in English like it is in the Hebrew language, but it clearly means a person who could not afford the more expensive types of a sin-offering. The word translated "one from the flock" means either a sheep or a goat. If a person could not afford either of these animals, he could bring a bird for his sin-offering. The principle of varying the offering according to what the worshiper could afford was implied in connection with the rededication-offering (see comments on Lev. 1:10 in MESSAGE 1 under the heading "and if his offering is of the flock, [that is] of sheep or of goats" and in Lev. 1:14 in MESSAGE 1 under the heading "And if his offering to Jehovah [is] a rededication-offering of birds."). In this verse that principle is explained explicitly. Jehovah was interested, not in the wealth of the worshiper but in the sincerity of the worshiper's heart.

then he shall bring to Jehovah his offense that he sinned. KJV translates the word "offense" in this verse as "trespass offering," but it translates

[7] ASV, RSV, SGV, NASB, JB, ABV, LB, NWV, and HCSB all interpret the word in this verse to refer to the offering. MV, NEB, and DRV are on stronger ground in interpreting it to refer to the offense. NIV understands it to refer to the offering; however, it misinterprets the purpose of the offering. It calls it a "penalty," instead of recognizing it as an offering of gratitude.

the same words in verse 6 as simply "trespass." It is difficult to explains why the word should be translated in these two different ways in succeeding verses. Most other translations avoid this difficulty by translating the word as "trespass offering" or some other similar name in both verses. When they do so, even translations that are committed to a literal word-for-word translation of the original, are forced to adopt some oddly free translations, adding words that are not even implied in the original or changing the wording altogether. It is far better to translate the words just as they are written. In this verse, the words simply say, "his offense that he sinned." This translation clarifies the meaning in two ways: (1) It is consistent with verse 6 that says the sinner was to bring his offense to Jehovah, which is the right place to bring our sins. Only God can remove them. (2) It confirms that "offense" and "sin" both have the same meaning. They are two different words for sin. Previously in Leviticus the expression "his sin that he sinned" has been used frequently. In this verse, "his offense that he sinned" is used instead and has the same meaning.

[by offering] two turtledoves, or two young pigeons. He was to take his sins to Jehovah by offering a sin-offering. Since he could not afford a sheep or a goat, he could bring two birds. The birds that are specified are discussed in comments on Leviticus 1:14 in MESSAGE 1 under the heading "Then he shall offer his offering from turtledoves or from young pigeons.

One for a sin-offering, and the other for a rededication-offering. In order for all the ideas incorporated in the sin-offering to be included when a sin-offering was of a bird, it was necessary to offer two birds. One was to be a sin-offering. The other was to be a rededication-offering, which shows that the idea of total surrender to God was incorporated in the sin-offering. Surrendering one's self to God was the only act that would obtain forgiveness for sin.

Verse 8. **And he shall bring them to the priest; and he shall offer [the one] that [is] for the sin-offering first. And he shall separate its head from its neck, but he shall not pull [it] apart.**

And he shall bring them unto the priest, Even an offering as small as two little birds was to be offered at The Tabernacle, and the offering was to be presided over by a priest. A bird offering was that important, not because of the value of the offering but because of what it stood for in the worshiper's life.

And he shall offer [the one] that [is] for the the sin offering first, The bird used for a sin-offering was to be offered first, because receiving forgiveness for sin was the purpose of this offering.

And he shall separate its head from its neck. This procedure was the same as that for the rededication-offering, except that it was explained in greater detail in connection with instructions for the rededication-offering. It signified that the worshiper was turning from all that was sinful and ugly in his life, and it was being removed from him (see comments on Lev. 1:16 in MESSAGE 1).

but he shall not pull [it] apart. This same instruction was given in connection with the rededication-offering, but again it is not described in less detail in this verse to avoid unnecessary repetition (see comments on Lev. 1:17 in MESSAGE 1). It symbolized that the worshiper was opening every part of his inner life to God.

Verse 9. **And he shall splatter some of the the sin-offering on the side of the altar; and the rest of the blood he shall squeeze out at the base of the altar. It [is] a sin offering.**

And he shall splatter some of the blood of the sin-offering on the side of the altar; and the rest of the blood he shall squeeze out on the base of the altar. The handling of the blood of a bird sin-offering was slightly different from the handling of the blood of a bird rededication-offering. In a bird rededication-offering, all of the blood was squeeze out against the side of the altar (see comments on Lev. 1: 15 in MESSAGE 1 under the heading "and its blood shall be squeezed out on the side of the altar), whereas in a sin-offering some of the blood was splashed against the side of the altar and the remainder was squeezed out in the trough at the base of the altar. This practice was in keeping with the use of the blood in a sin-offering for a ruler,

except that in this case the blood was not smeared on the horns of the altar. It was splashed on the side of the altar, probably because of the small amount of blood in a bird.. The significance was virtually the same, except that in this case, by not smearing the blood on the horns of the altar, it did not picture as clearly the power that it took for God to provide forgiveness (see comments on Lev. 4:25 above).

It is a sin offering. Offering a bird was just as much a sin-offering as offering a lamb or a goat if the worshiper could afford no more. The offering was effective and had meaning, not because of its value but because of the sincerity of the worshiper.

Verse 10. **And he shall offer the second [as] a rededication-offering, according to the judgment: and the priest shall cover over him from his sin that he sinned, and it shall be forgiven him.**

And he shall offer the second [as] a rededication-offering, The bird used for a rededication-offering was then offered. Evidently, this practice was meant to be a substitute for roasting the fat of an animal sin-offering on the altar, since birds do not have enough fat to separate it out and roast it on the altar. Using the rededication-offering as a substitute for roasting the fat in other sin-offerings showed that the idea of the rededication-offering was the same as the idea in roasting the fat of an animal sin-offerings (see comments on Lev. 3:3-5 in MESSAGE 1 and on Lev. 4:8-10 in this MESSAGE). It symbolized that the worshiper was giving all of his life to God. He surrendered His life in gratitude for God's forgiveness.

according to the judgment: The word translated "judgment" is another Hebrew word for "commandment." It referred to the decision or judgment of a judge in a law court. This word shows that the regulations concerning the offerings were pronouncements handed down by the Judge of the universe.

The phrase means that the bird was to be offered in accordance with instructions already given for a rededication-offering of a bird (see comments on Lev. 1:14-17 in MESSAGE 1). This instruction meant that none of either bird was given to the priests, probably because the birds were too small to provide any real support for them. However, since the whole bird was offered on the altar, the symbolism of being used in God's service was preserved.

And the priest shall cover over him from his sin that he sinned, and it shall be forgiven him. See comments on Lev. 1:4 in MESSAGE 1 under the under the heading "to cover over him" and on Lev. 4:20b for an explanation of these words. Whereas "offense that he sinned" was used in verse 5, "sin that he sinned" is used in this verse. They obvious have the same meaning and strongly support the conclusion that the word "offense" in verse 5 is simply another word for sin and the two expression have the same meaning.

(e) Of fine flour (5:11-13)

Verse 11. **But if his hand does not extend to two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, then he shall bring [for] his offering for that which he sinned a tenth of an ephah of fine flour as a sin-offering. He shall put no oil on it, and he shall put no frankincense on it, because it [is] a sin-offering.**

But if his hand does not extend to two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, then he shall bring [for] his offering for that which he sinned the tenth of an ephah of fine flour as a sin-offering; A fourth sub-type of sin-offering for ordinary citizens was an offering that the worshiper could offer when even two small birds were too expensive for him. It consisted of an offering of fine flour, which meant wheat flour (see comments on Lev. 2:1 in MESSAGE 1 under the heading "his offering may be [of] fine flour). The amount of flour to be offered was one-tenth of an ephah. Some uncertainty exists concerning the size of an ephah. Most believe that it was slightly smaller than a bushel, making this offering equal to about three and one-half quarts of fine flour. Others believe that an ephah was about half the size of a bushel, making this offering equal to about three and one-half pints of fine flour. In either case, it was an inexpensive offering. Jehovah did not want the sin-offering to be beyond the means of any person in

Israel. Exodus 16:36 says that a tenth of an ephah was called an "omer."

The use of fine flour instead of an animal did not present as clear a picture of the meaning of forgiveness. It did not portray as clearly the surrender of the worshiper's life or the givng of the promised Son's life to pay for the sins, but it did allow a poorer worshiper the opportunity to express repentance of the sins. It was intended to contain the same significance as the animal offersngs.

This type of sin-offering also reveals the inadequacy of the name "meal-offering" or "grain-offering" for the homage-offering. These verses show that a sin-offering could also be made of grain. Using the name "meal-offering" or "grain-offering" for an homage- offering confuses the two offerings (see comments on Lev. 2:1 in MESSAGE 1 under the heading "offers an offering of homage to Jehovah").

He shall put no oil on it, and he shall put no frankincense on it, because it is a sin-offering. The flour used for a sin-offering was prepared differently from the flour used for an homage-offering. This fact emphasizes that the two offerings should not be confused and that their names should be kept distinct. No oil or frankincense was to be used in a sin-offering. Those symbols of richness and pleasantness (see comments on Lev. 2:1 under the headings "and he shall pour oil upon it" and "and put frankincense thereon.") were inappropriate for an offering that expressed the worshiper's sorrow for his sins.

Verse 12. **Then he shall bring it to the priest, and the priest shall take from it a fist full, a representative portion, and he shall roast it on the altar among the fire-offerings of Jehovah. It [is] a sin offering.**

Then shall he bring it to the priest. Even an offering so small as a few quarts or a few pints of flour was important enough to take to a priest and offer on the altar at The Tabernacle. This instruction was in line with the command that no offerings were to be offered away from The Tabernacle, as had been the practice previously (see comments under Introduction to MESSAGE 1 and on Lev. 1:1 in MESSAGE 1 under the heading "out of The Tent of Meeting" and on Lev. :1:3 in MESSAGE 1 under the heading "The Tent of Meeting"). Even the smallest offering was to be protected from corruption, because every detail was commanded by God for a significant purpose.

and the priest shall take from it a fist full, a representative portion, and he shall roast it on the altar, among the fire-offerings of Jehovah. A representative fistful (see comments on Lev. 2:2 in MESSAGE 1 under the heading "And he shall grasp from it one of his fist's full of its flour . . .") of the fine flour was to be roasted on the altar along with other a fire-offering that were roasting there (see comments on Lev. 1:9 in MESSAGE 1 under the heading a fire-offering"). This practice corresponded to roasting the fat of an animal sin-offering on the altar, and the symbolism was the same (see comments on Lev. 4:8-10 above). It also had the same meaning as giving parts of an animal sin-offering to the priest (see comments on Lev. 4:11-12,26 in this MESSAGE and on Lev. 6:26 in MESSAGE 7).

It [is] a sin offering. An offering of a small amount of flour was just as effective and meaningful as the offering of a kid or a lamb if the worshiper could afford no more and if he offered it in sincere repentance for his sin.

Verse 13. **And the priest shall cover over him from his sin that he sinned against one of these [commandments], and it shall be forgiven him. Then it shall be for the priest, like the homage-offering.**

And the priest shall cover over him from his sin that he sinned against one of these [commandments], and it shall be forgiven him: (See comments on Leviticus 1:4 in MESSAGE 1 under the heading "to cover over him") This offering pictured the covering of a worshiper from his sin just as surely as the other forms of the offering did. If repentance was in the worshiper's heart, an offering of flour was just as expressive as an offering of animals or birds that had blood.

Then it shall be for the priest, like an homage-offering. The word "it" refers to the

offering after the representative portion had been roasted on the altar. In Hebrew, "it" is feminine in form, and "sin-offering" is feminine. This clause is a definite statement that the remainder of the flour belonged to the priest, just as the remainder of the flour belonged to the pries in homage-offerings (see comments on Lev. 2:3 in MESSAGE 1 under the heading And the remainder of the homage-offering [shall be] for Aaron and for his sons).

Application

Sin is a very present reality in the life of a Christian. The fact that a Christian sins does not mean that he does not love God or that he does not belong to God. It indicates that he still has weaknesses and is not able to overcome all the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil. His heart desires to be perfect, but his flesh is not able to achieve it. His sins do not destroy his standing with God, but they do interfere with his fellowship with God. They need to be confessed to God with a broken heart. When they are confessed, God forgives those sins freely and cleanses him completely. He also restores the forgiven sinner to full fellowship with Him and to the privilege of serving Him in whatever task Jehovah has assigned to him.

For a saved believer to receive forgiveness for his sins, nothing is required except sorrowful confession (1 John 1:9). The penalty for his sin was paid for in full when he was saved. What he needs is restoration to fellowship with God, and he receives that restoration in full when he sorrowfully confesses he sin to God. He does not need to try to purchase or work for or earn forgiveness. Forgiveness is freely available to the poorest as fully as to the richest. When his heart yields, God forgives. The forgiveness of sin in the life of one who is already a child of God is not like a pardon granted by a judge. It is like the forgiveness that one friend gives to another. It does not remove a penalty; it removes resentments and restores fellowship.

Critical Note

Two critical questions have been raised with regard to Leviticus 5:1-13. The first has to do with source. It has been argued that these verses came from a different document than Leviticus 4:1-35. One argument used to favor that position is that Leviticus 5:1-13 does not mention the four forms of the sin-offering that are in Leviticus 4:1-35. This argument has no weight because it is built on the supposition that each segment of a message must repeat what has already been said to prove that both segments came from the same source. Certainly it should be understood that the same writer would not think it necessary to repeat what he had said already but instead would assume that the reader would already know it from what he said previously. The failure to repeat what had already been said is stronger evidence for one writer than two. There is nothing in chapter 5 that contradicts in any way the four forms of the sin-offering that had already been described. A second argument that has been used in favor of this view is that the sin mentioned in Leviticus 5:1 does not seem to come under the heading of an "unwitting" or "inadvertent" sin, which supposedly was mentioned in Leviticus 4:1, 22, 27. This argument is built on a mistranslation and misinterpretation of the Hebrew word in question. The section does not refer to "unwitting sins" but to "sins by mistake" or "sins of weakness" (see comments on Leviticus 4:2 in this MESSAGE under the heading by mistake).

On the other hand, in favor of the position that both passages come from the same source is the fact that Leviticus 5:6-7 presupposes the information given in Leviticus 4:27-35 and cannot be understood without it. The theory that fragments this message into pieces from separate documents solves no problems, but it creates some new ones. In addition, it reveals a lack of understanding of one of the most common characteristics of Biblical literature. That characteristic is that it is common for an idea to be presented first in summary fashion and then repeated again and again, each time with additional details or using different language but also without necessarily repeating everything that has already been said. Thus, the meaning grows fuller and clearer with each repetition. This style of writing is common from Genesis through Revelation. It is certainly the style God used in describing the offerings to Moses and to Israel. Theologians call this method "progressive revelation." Progressive revelation is the way God reveals to us today

what He wants us to do with our lives, and it is the way He revealed the truths of His Bible. The progressive way this passage develops the meaning of sin-offerings does not give evidence of composite authorship. It illustrates Biblical style.

The second critical question raised with regard to this passage has to do with outline. This question arises from the fact that Leviticus 5:6,7 contain the Hebrew word that can mean either "offense" or "offense-offering. "Offense-offering" (or "trespass-offering") is the fifth type of Israel's fire-offerings, and it is described in Leviticus 5:14-6:7. Some understand the word to mean "offense-offering" in Leviticus 5:6,7 and conclude that the description of offense-offerings begins in Leviticus 5:1, instead of in Leviticus 5:14. Five strong reasons argue against that opinion. One reason is that Leviticus 5:1-13 is much more clearly and easily understood when read in connection with what precedes than they are in connection with what follows. The second reason is that this same word occurs in Leviticus 4:3 (see comments on that verse above). No one has proposed that the word means "offense-offering" in Leviticus 4:3 or that the description of the fifth type of offering begins there. It is much better to understand the word in Leviticus 5:6,7 to be a reference to an offense, as all translations and interpreters understand it in Leviticus 4:3. In that case, no need exists for trying to begin a new section of the text in Leviticus 5:1. The third reason is that the verb form of the word is used in Leviticus 5:2,3,4,5 and is understood by all to mean "to offend" or "to be guilty." If the verb form is used to refer to the offense in the passage, no reason exists to insist that the noun form cannot refer to the offense or to guilt in the same passage and instead must refer to the offense-offering or trespass-offering. The fourth reason is that the name "sin-offering" is used in Leviticus 5:6,9 (twice),11 (twice). These five references to the sin-offering provide much stronger evidence that Leviticus 5:1-13 apply to sin-offerings than the possible two references to "offense-offerings" provide evidence that Leviticus 5:1-13 apply to offense-offerings. The fifth reason is that the consistent practice of the book of Leviticus is to mark the beginning of each new message with the words, "And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying…" or their equivalent. Those introductory words occur in Leviticus 5:14 but not in Leviticus 5:1. The use of the word "offense" in Leviticus 5:6,7 is simply evidence that the word for "offense" and the word for "sin" have virtually the same meaning and that sin-offerings were appropriate for sins that were called "offenses" just as much as for sins that are described with the word we translate as "sin." All of these reasons argue strongly, if not conclusively, that the description of the "offense-offering" begins in Leviticus 5:14.