Refreshed IN THE WORD
For thy word hath quickened me
PSALM 119:50

Torah Studies

Connecting the Torah and Jesus

STUDY 5

God Makes a Way for Forgiveness

Day Five · Leviticus 4 and the sin offering

Read the complete Bible passages first. Then explore God’s promise of forgiveness and how these offerings point us to Jesus, with simple explanations and verses beside the teaching.

For personal reading and study with friends

King James Version · Complete Scripture passages

Read and share online

Part 1 · Read the Bible passages first

Read these complete passages before the teaching. You can take turns reading with a friend. The Bible quotations keep the wording of the King James Version; the teaching explains older words in everyday language.

Leviticus 4:1-35

1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

2 Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a soul shall sin through ignorance against any of the commandments of the LORD concerning things which ought not to be done, and shall do against any of them:

3 If the priest that is anointed do sin according to the sin of the people; then let him bring for his sin, which he hath sinned, a young bullock without blemish unto the LORD for a sin offering.

4 And he shall bring the bullock unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD; and shall lay his hand upon the bullock's head, and kill the bullock before the LORD.

5 And the priest that is anointed shall take of the bullock's blood, and bring it to the tabernacle of the congregation:

6 And the priest shall dip his finger in the blood, and sprinkle of the blood seven times before the LORD, before the vail of the sanctuary.

7 And the priest shall put some of the blood upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the LORD, which is in the tabernacle of the congregation; and shall pour all the blood of the bullock at the bottom of the altar of the burnt offering, which is at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

8 And he shall take off from it all the fat of the bullock for the sin offering; the fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that is upon the inwards,

9 And the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, which is by the flanks, and the caul above the liver, with the kidneys, it shall he take away,

10 As it was taken off from the bullock of the sacrifice of peace offerings: and the priest shall burn them upon the altar of the burnt offering.

11 And the skin of the bullock, and all his flesh, with his head, and with his legs, and his inwards, and his dung,

12 Even the whole bullock shall he carry forth without the camp unto a clean place, where the ashes are poured out, and burn him on the wood with fire: where the ashes are poured out shall he be burnt.

13 And if the whole congregation of Israel sin through ignorance, and the thing be hid from the eyes of the assembly, and they have done somewhat against any of the commandments of the LORD concerning things which should not be done, and are guilty;

14 When the sin, which they have sinned against it, is known, then the congregation shall offer a young bullock for the sin, and bring him before the tabernacle of the congregation.

15 And the elders of the congregation shall lay their hands upon the head of the bullock before the LORD: and the bullock shall be killed before the LORD.

16 And the priest that is anointed shall bring of the bullock’s blood to the tabernacle of the congregation:

17 And the priest shall dip his finger in some of the blood, and sprinkle it seven times before the LORD, even before the vail.

18 And he shall put some of the blood upon the horns of the altar which is before the LORD, that is in the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall pour out all the blood at the bottom of the altar of the burnt offering, which is at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

19 And he shall take all his fat from him, and burn it upon the altar.

20 And he shall do with the bullock as he did with the bullock for a sin offering, so shall he do with this: and the priest shall make an atonement for them, and it shall be forgiven them.

21 And he shall carry forth the bullock without the camp, and burn him as he burned the first bullock: it is a sin offering for the congregation.

22 When a ruler hath sinned, and done somewhat through ignorance against any of the commandments of the LORD his God concerning things which should not be done, and is guilty;

23 Or if his sin, wherein he hath sinned, come to his knowledge; he shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats, a male without blemish:

24 And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the goat, and kill it in the place where they kill the burnt offering before the LORD: it is a sin offering.

25 And the priest shall take of the blood of the sin offering with his finger, and put it upon the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and shall pour out his blood at the bottom of the altar of burnt offering.

26 And he shall burn all his fat upon the altar, as the fat of the sacrifice of peace offerings: and the priest shall make an atonement for him as concerning his sin, and it shall be forgiven him.

27 And if any one of the common people sin through ignorance, while he doeth somewhat against any of the commandments of the LORD concerning things which ought not to be done, and be guilty;

28 Or if his sin, which he hath sinned, come to his knowledge: then he shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats, a female without blemish, for his sin which he hath sinned.

29 And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin offering, and slay the sin offering in the place of the burnt offering.

30 And the priest shall take of the blood thereof with his finger, and put it upon the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and shall pour out all the blood thereof at the bottom of the altar.

31 And he shall take away all the fat thereof, as the fat is taken away from off the sacrifice of peace offerings; and the priest shall burn it upon the altar for a sweet savour unto the LORD; and the priest shall make an atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him.

32 And if he bring a lamb for a sin offering, he shall bring it a female without blemish.

33 And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin offering, and slay it for a sin offering in the place where they kill the burnt offering.

34 And the priest shall take of the blood of the sin offering with his finger, and put it upon the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and shall pour out all the blood thereof at the bottom of the altar:

35 And he shall take away all the fat thereof, as the fat of the lamb is taken away from the sacrifice of the peace offerings; and the priest shall burn them upon the altar, according to the offerings made by fire unto the LORD: and the priest shall make an atonement for his sin that he hath committed, and it shall be forgiven him.

Hebrews 10:1-18

1 For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.

3 But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.

4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me:

6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure.

7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.

8 Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law;

9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.

10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:

12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;

13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.

14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

15 Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before,

16 This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;

17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.

18 Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.

Hebrews 13:11-13

11 For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp.

12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

13 Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.

1 John 1:8-10

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

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

10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

1 John 2:1-2

1 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Part 2 · Let’s understand what we read

Opening prayer: Father, help us understand Your Word. Give us honest hearts that are willing to learn. Show us how Jesus brings forgiveness and teaches us to obey You. Amen.

In Day 4, we learned about the peace offering and life close to God. Day 5 asks a question we all need to face: What do we do when we discover that we have sinned?

Torah is God’s instruction. Leviticus first taught Israel how to live and worship as His covenant people. A covenant is a binding relationship built on promises and responsibilities. We first listen to what this chapter taught Israel. Then, as followers of Jesus, we read how the New Testament connects these sacrifices to Him.

Our main truth: We can be honest about our sin because God has provided forgiveness through Jesus.

1. Not knowing does not make every action right

Leviticus 4:1-2

1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

2 Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a soul shall sin through ignorance against any of the commandments of the LORD concerning things which ought not to be done, and shall do against any of them:

Sin means going against God's good commands. This chapter focuses on sin done without realizing it or intending to disobey. The phrase "through ignorance" points to that kind of sin. God still cares about what happened, even when the person did not understand it at first.

This does not mean every ordinary mistake is a sin. Dropping a pencil is not the same as disobeying God. Leviticus 4 is talking about breaking His commands. When we learn that something we did was wrong, God calls us to respond honestly.

Imagine sharing a hurtful story because you thought it was true. Later you learn it was false. You did not plan to spread a lie, but someone was still hurt. The loving response is to stop repeating it, tell the truth, and ask forgiveness. This example helps us see why "I didn't know" is not the end of the conversation.

When someone shows me that I was wrong, do I listen or make excuses?

2. Everyone needs God’s mercy

The chapter names four groups. Each group had to deal with sin before God. Here is a simple guide to the passages you already read.

Leviticus 4:3-12: The anointed priest brought a young bull without a defect. “Anointed” means he had been set apart to serve. Being a priest did not put him above God’s instructions.

Leviticus 4:13-21: The whole congregation brought a young bull. The elders represented the people. A whole group could be wrong, even when its members agreed with one another.

Leviticus 4:22-26: A ruler brought a male goat without a defect. A position of authority did not remove his need for forgiveness.

Leviticus 4:27-35: An ordinary person brought a female goat or a female lamb without a defect. God’s instructions included people who had no special title.

God’s mercy was needed by leaders, families, and the whole community. That is a lesson for us too. Being a pastor, parent, teacher, or longtime believer does not mean we never need correction.

3. When sin becomes known, respond

Leviticus 4:27-28

27 And if any one of the common people sin through ignorance, while he doeth somewhat against any of the commandments of the LORD concerning things which ought not to be done, and be guilty;

28 Or if his sin, which he hath sinned, come to his knowledge: then he shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats, a female without blemish, for his sin which he hath sinned.

Notice the words “come to his knowledge.” The person became aware of the sin. The next step was to bring the offering God had required. The person could not undo the past, but could respond to God in the present.

The offering was a real part of Israel's worship. A person brought the animal, placed a hand on its head, and presented it for sacrifice. The priest then carried out the instructions about the blood and the altar. An altar was a place where offerings were presented to God.

A few older words may help: "bullock" means a young bull. "Inwards" means inner organs, "flanks" means sides, and "caul" means a covering near the liver. These words describe the animal and the parts named in the offering.

Some details are different for the priest and the whole congregation. Their offerings involved blood brought inside the tabernacle, the special tent used for worship. The offerings for a ruler or an ordinary person involved the altar outside. Read each set of instructions carefully instead of treating every offering as identical.

These instructions show us that sin was serious. God also gave His people a way to approach Him. For us, the response begins with telling the truth about our sin and turning to the forgiveness He gives through Jesus.

4. Listen for God's promise of forgiveness

Leviticus 4:20

20 And he shall do with the bullock as he did with the bullock for a sin offering, so shall he do with this: and the priest shall make an atonement for them, and it shall be forgiven them.

"Atonement" is a word used for dealing with sin before God. In this chapter, the priest made atonement by carrying out the sacrifice God commanded. The promise was clear: the people would be forgiven.

That promise appears again for the ruler and the ordinary person in verses 26, 31, and 35. God was teaching His people both the seriousness of sin and the reality of His mercy. Forgiveness was His gift; He was the One who provided the way to receive it.

As Christians, we should not say that people in Leviticus could never be forgiven. The chapter itself promises forgiveness. Hebrews helps us see something more: these repeated sacrifices did not accomplish the final removal of sin that Jesus' sacrifice brings.

5. Jesus gave Himself once for all

Hebrews 10:4

4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

Hebrews calls the earlier sacrifices a “shadow” in verse 1. A shadow can show the outline of someone coming toward us. It is real, but it is not the person. The offerings taught Israel about sin, worship, and forgiveness. Our Christian reading sees their fulfillment in Jesus.

Hebrews 10:10-12

10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:

12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;

“Sanctified” means set apart for God. Jesus gave His own body for us. His sacrifice does not need to be repeated. That is why we do not bring an animal to receive forgiveness through Him.

We cannot improve His sacrifice by trying to pay God back. We receive His grace by faith. Then we learn to obey because we belong to Him. Gratitude grows into a changed way of living.

Hebrews 10:14 says His one offering makes His people complete before God. This does not mean believers never need to grow or admit a wrong. It means we depend on Jesus’ complete sacrifice. John still teaches believers to avoid sin and to confess it when they fail.

6. Jesus suffered outside the gate

Hebrews 13:11-13

11 For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp.

12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

13 Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.

In Leviticus 4:11-12 and 21, the bodies of the bulls were taken outside the camp and burned. Hebrews points to the pattern of sin offerings taken outside the camp and connects it with Jesus suffering outside the city gate.

“Without the gate” means outside the gate. “Reproach” means the shame and rejection He faced. Jesus did not remain far away from our need. He suffered to set His people apart for God. Following Him can also mean standing with Him when others reject Him.

7. Forgiven people learn to live honestly

1 John 1:9

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

To confess is to admit the truth before God. We can name what we did without blaming someone else. God already knows; confession brings our words into agreement with the truth.

Repentance means turning away from sin and turning toward God. If we have hurt someone, an honest response may include an apology and making things right where we can. Those actions do not buy forgiveness. They show that we are taking His instruction seriously.

1 John 2:1-2

1 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

John gives us both a goal and a promise. The goal is that we do not sin. The promise is that, if we do sin, we have an “advocate”: someone who speaks on our behalf. Jesus Christ the righteous represents us before the Father.

“Propitiation” means the sacrifice that deals with our sin and God’s righteous judgment. Jesus Himself is that sacrifice. The Father’s provision reaches beyond one small group; John says Jesus is the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.

We do not need to pretend that sin does not matter. We also do not need to hide from the Father. We can come honestly, trust Jesus, receive forgiveness, and learn to walk in obedience.

8. God’s instruction reaches the heart

Hebrews 10:16-18

16 This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;

17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.

18 Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.

The new covenant includes both forgiveness and God’s instruction within us. His desire is for His ways to shape our thoughts and choices. His mercy teaches us to love what is right.

Think about the story we shared earlier. A person who receives forgiveness can now choose a different path: check a story before repeating it, refuse cruel gossip, and speak with care. That is a small, real way God’s Word can shape a heart.

Talk about it together

1. What kind of sin is the main focus of Leviticus 4? How is it different from an ordinary accident?

2. What do the four groups in the chapter teach us about our need for God’s mercy?

3. Which promise is repeated in Leviticus 4:20, 26, 31, and 35?

4. According to Hebrews 10, why does Jesus' sacrifice not need to be repeated?

5. What is the difference between making an excuse and confessing a sin? What would an honest response look like this week?

One step to practice today

Take a quiet moment with the Father. If you recognize a specific sin, tell Him the truth. Ask for forgiveness and help to obey. If you owe someone an apology, give it without adding an excuse. Make a simple plan to respond differently next time.

You do not have to share private details with the study group. You can simply name the lesson you are learning and the step you want to take.

A verse to remember

1 John 1:9

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

Say the verse slowly. Notice what we do: confess. Notice what God promises: forgiveness and cleansing. Our confidence rests in His faithfulness and in Jesus, not in finding perfect words for our prayer.

Closing prayer

Father, thank You for telling us the truth about sin and for showing us Your mercy. Forgive us for the wrong we have done. Thank You that Jesus gave Himself for us once for all. Help us receive Your forgiveness, make things right where we can, and let Your Word shape our hearts. Teach us to walk honestly and love others well. In Jesus' name, amen.

I pray this study helps you come closer to the Father with an honest heart. Keep learning, keep trusting Jesus, and keep walking in His Word. I love you, my friends.

Scripture and sources

Scripture text was checked against the King James Version published by eBible.org. The complete verses are reproduced with their historical wording. Verse numbers and layout are adapted for reading; editorial footnotes are omitted. Tap any Scripture reference to view its source.

Bible edition and text