

The sin offering was not voluntary but required for unintentional sins committed by individuals or the people as a whole. Different offerings were required for various classes of people, from a bull for a priest (4:3) to a handful of flour for the poorest Israelites (5:11).

Questions:

1. Unlike the three previous sacrifices – the burnt offering, the grain offering, and the peace offering – the sin offering had no aroma pleasing to the Lord. (In fact, 5:11 specifically commands that the sin offering contain no incense.) What might this tell us?
2. What is the significance of the offeror placing his hand on the head of the animal to be sacrificed? How might it apply to our relationship with Christ?
3. Read Hebrews 13:10-13. We are told that Jesus suffered “outside the camp” just as the sin offering was burned outside the camp of the Israelites in the desert. What does that say about Christ? About us?
4. This offering was for unintentional sins. What was the penalty for intentional sins?
5. According to William MacDonald, “Many commentators say that the sin offering speaks of Christ dealing with *what we are*, whereas the trespass offering pictures Him dealing with *what we have done*.” How is this supported by the rule that the value of the offering was based on the status of the offeror, not on the gravity of the sin?
6. The sin of a priest (4:3-12) or of the whole community (4:13-21) seems to require a higher sacrifice than those committed by a secular leader (4:22-26) or ordinary person (4:27-35). The priest or the community must offer a bull, the largest animal; its blood is sprinkled inside the tent of meeting; and all of it must be burned up and none eaten. Why is their sin more serious?
7. What did the sin offering accomplish for the one bringing it?