

# Restitution



Week Six

## inTro



Read This Week's Passage:  
Leviticus 5:14—6:7

### MORE THAN AN APOLOGY

I'll never forget the day my Siberian husky got loose from her kennel and slaughtered all eight of our neighbor's sheep. I learned what she had done when a police officer took me to the farmer's house, where I looked in horror at the dead sheep scattered around the field.

I expected the farmer to order the officer to shoot my dog or charge me a fortune for her actions, but instead, he simply asked what happened. I explained that she had broken free from her kennel and that I was deeply sorry. The man looked at me and said, "I understand. Please make sure she's tied up in the future." And that was it! Even the officer was shocked by the farmer's response. I was so moved that I volunteered to clean his stalls and mow his lawn for as long as it took to make up for the money he had lost from the attack. I worked for him all summer, doing my best to make up for something he had already forgiven me for. This, my friends, is restitution, and it is something God values.

God wants more than just apologies for our sins; He wants us to make things right with those we have wronged. This is almost forgotten virtue in Christianity today, but Leviticus 5 and 6 reveals that it's required of God's people. Jesus affirmed this, too (Matt. 5:23, 24). Leviticus 5:14–6:7 includes unfaithfulness in tithes and offerings ("holy things" of Lev. 5:16), deceiving, extortion, stealing, cheating, bearing false witness in a court of law, and silence regarding a sin you witnessed as some of the sins we need to make restitution for.

This week we will look at the guilt offering, which deals with the sin one has committed against God and the sins we have committed against those around us.



## inScribe

Write out Leviticus 5:14—6:7 from the translation of your choice. If you're pressed for time, write out Leviticus 5:14–19. You may also rewrite the passage in your own words, or outline or mind-map it.

## inGest



Go back to your scribed text and study the passage.

**Circle** repeated words/phrases/ideas

**Underline** words/phrases that are important and have meaning to you



Draw **Arrows** to connect words/phrases to other associated or related words/phrases

What special insights do your marks seem overall to point to?



Memorize your favorite verse. Write it out multiple times to help with memorization.

How can we move past the uncomfortable feelings that accompany making restitution with those we have wronged?



Read more at  
[www.inversebible.org/stw06-3](http://www.inversebible.org/stw06-3)

## JESUS, OUR GUILT OFFERING

The guilt offering was also called the trespass offering because the individual had trespassed into either the rights of God or the rights of those around them. This particular sacrifice was for sins committed either against God by violating His holy things, such as tithe and offerings, or against the people around them through theft, lying, deception, and violence.

This sacrifice was unique because it not only provided atonement for intentional sins but also required that the sinner make restitution. In fact, the restitution was to take place before the transgression offering was sacrificed and the sinner was given divine forgiveness. Sadly, this Old and New Testament condition for forgiveness of sins and right standing with God is all but ignored today.

The guilt offering shows us that sins not only hurt God and require the blood of Jesus to be atoned for and forgiven, but also hurt the people around us (Lev. 5:6, 7). The truth is that there is no hope for any of us if God does not forgive us for our intentional sins since many of our sins are committed intentionally. We either know that what we're doing is in violation of God's Word or we should have known, choosing instead to neglect His Word and deny our moral conscience. Thankfully, the guilt or trespass offering points to the forgiveness Jesus provided on Calvary for willfully committed sin as well as unintentional sin.

Jesus can be seen everywhere in the guilt offering. He is the ram "without blemish" and the one exchanged for silver coins (Lev. 5:15). He is the priest who covers our sins with His blood and gives us forgiveness (Lev. 5:16; 7:7). Jesus is the "most holy" one (Lev. 7:1)—the one who was slaughtered for us all (Lev. 7:2). He is spiritual food for our souls (Lev. 7:6). These are just a few of the many details used to describe the guilt offering that clearly point to Jesus, who became our burnt offering, peace offering, fellowship offering, grain offering, and guilt offering. What a wonderful Savior!

## MAKING THINGS RIGHT

When we embrace God's value of restitution for wrongs done to either Him or others, we are required by our Creator to follow these steps:

1. *Confess* (Lev. 5:5; Num. 5:6, 7). It is necessary for us to fess up to what we have done. This is not the time to generalize, but to be specific about how we have hurt God and hurt others. This confession is not meant to be corporate, but personal. In other words, this is not the time to confess what your church, country, or colleagues have done, but what you personally have done to hurt someone else, intentionally or unintentionally. This confession is made to God and God alone. Notice that this sacrifice is brought "to the Lord" (Lev. 5:6).

2. *Make restitution* (Lev. 5:16; 6:4, 5; Num. 5:7). The next step in the process is to give back what you have taken and add 20 percent to it. Other passages in the Old Testament had the percentage much higher (see Ex. 22:1; 2 Sam. 12:6; Prov. 6:31), but here in Leviticus 5 it is only 20 percent because the sinner was confessing their sin rather than being caught in it and consequently forced to make restitution. Here we see the mercy of God displayed toward those who are quick to confess their guilt and make amends with God and those they have wronged.

There are some who demand that the descendants of those who have wronged others should be responsible for paying restitution, but this is not supported in Leviticus. God never punishes the children for the sins of their parents unless the children participate (2 Kings 14:6; Ezek. 18:6). But as Christians we are to alleviate any suffering that may have resulted from these wrongs. It's also important to know that the sinner comes to the altar of their own free will, not by force. God alone reads the heart, and God alone is responsible for vengeance. We can trust Him to sort generational traumas and transgressions out, but in the meantime we must not delay to right our personal wrongs with God and the people in our lives.

What happens if we can't make restitution for what we've done? What if circumstances such as restraining orders or death make it impossible? In the guilt offering, the sinner in those circumstances was required to make monetary restoration to the priests. In other words, they gave the church the money they were no longer able to give those they had wronged (Num. 5:8).

3. *Offer a sacrifice* (Lev. 6:6). Once the sinner has confessed and restitution has been made, they need depend on the atoning blood of Jesus to cover them. As usual, God offers this with great generosity, especially because the sinner has shown deep and true repentance. They have shown by confession and restitution that they are truly sorry for what they have done.



## inTerpret

After looking at your scribed and annotated text, what special insights do your marks overall seem to point to?



What questions emerge after studying Leviticus 5:14–6:7? What parts are difficult?

What other principles and conclusions do you find?

Should we still offer a sacrifice of some kind as part of the process of gaining forgiveness?

What are the negative results of thinking about God's forgiveness as something we have only to ask for instead of what it truly is: a process by which we show how deeply sorry we are?



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Restitution

(Cont. on p. 53)

## inSpect



What relationship do the following verses have with the primary passage?

Luke 19:1–10

Matthew 5:23–25

Numbers 5:6–8

Romans 12:17–21

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What other verses/promises come to mind with Leviticus 5:14–6:7?

(Cont. from inTerpret, p. 52):

Interestingly, for the other offerings we have discussed, birds or even flour could be used as a substitute for the bull, goat, or lamb used in the sacrifice. This was so the poor could participate and enjoy the benefits of forgiveness and salvation through faith in Christ. However, for the transgression offering, the only acceptable sacrifice was a ram. This was one of the mostly costly sacrifices, second only to the bull. This no doubt communicated the high cost that sin demands even when one is forgiven. Sin has consequences and, although forgiven through Jesus' death, often leaves scars in us and others that may be erased only when Christ returns.

Review your memorized verse from Leviticus 5:14–6:7.

# SALVATION OR RESTITUTION?

Most people don't like the concept of guilt. They think it's oppressive and that to feel it proves one's lack of faith in the gospel. However, guilt can be a very good thing! Imagine if a person felt no guilt for the evil they had done to others. We have a name for people like this: narcissistic sociopaths. These individuals are some of the most dangerous people on the planet, since they have no qualms about destroying your life, even taking fiendish joy from doing so. Guilt can therefore be a very positive thing, especially if it leads us to repentance and making restitution.

Yes, guilt is a good thing when it leads to confession of sin, restitution to those we have harmed, and ultimately forgiveness and salvation through the cross of Christ. I heard a preacher share the following illustration: When you tell a child not to touch a burning stove, you are treating them with love. However, if they touch a burning stove, they will experience a painful sensation in their hand. This not only confirms that you were right but keeps them from doing it again and causing themselves more grief. Guilt is like the stove; it causes us spiritual and emotional pain so that we will not continue to hurt ourselves and others. Guilt also proves that God is right in warning us to not touch the "unclean thing" (Lev. 5:2). Healthy guilt drives us to Jesus, where we find relief, purchased with His blood. Once you have followed the steps of confession, restitution, and sacrifice, all guilty feelings need to be placed on the cross, never to be taken up again.

Perhaps the greatest example of restitution is found in the story of Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1–10). For many years Zacchaeus had used his position as a tax collector to exploit others for his own financial gain, but he had begun to experience guilt and regret for his actions. He was excited when he heard Jesus was coming to town, for he longed for relief from his guilt and a clear path forward for his life. The story goes that he climbed up into a tree to watch Jesus as He approached. Suddenly Jesus stopped under the tree where Zacchaeus was perched and invited Himself over for dinner. Zacchaeus must have almost fallen out of the tree for joy as he gladly received Jesus into his home. Listen to Zacchaeus' words and see if you can hear the essence of the guilt offering: "Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore four-fold" (v. 8). Notice how Jesus responded to that commitment to make restitution: "Today salvation has come to this house" (v. 9).

So, which comes first, salvation or restitution? The answer is both! Because of the grace of the Lord Jesus in blessing us with both His presence and the gift of salvation, we are moved to make restitution not only to God but to those we have harmed as well. As far as the gospel is concerned, restitution is a necessary fruit of salvation!



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Meditate on Leviticus 5:14–6:7 again and look for where Jesus is.



What is He saying to you personally through these texts?

What are some ways we can make restitution when our wrongs don't involve money? (For example, cheating, lying, violence, neglect.)

How do you see Jesus differently or see Him again?

Prayer Response:



Read more at [www.inversebible.org/stw06-6](http://www.inversebible.org/stw06-6)



Review the memory verse.  
How does it apply to your  
life this week?

After this week's study of  
Leviticus 5:14—6:7, what  
needs to be changed in you?

What needs to be changed  
around you?



Read more inSight from the  
Spirit of Prophecy at  
[www.inverseible.org/stw06-7](http://www.inverseible.org/stw06-7)

## THE WORK OF RESTITUTION

"It is inevitable that children should suffer from the consequences of parental wrong-doing, but they are not punished for their parents' guilt, except as they participate in their sins. It is usually the case, however, that children walk in the steps of their parent" (Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 306).

"Every converted soul will, like Zacchaeus, signalize the entrance of Christ into his heart by an abandonment of the unrighteous practices that have marked his life. Like the chief publican, he will give proof of his sincerity by making restitution. . . .

"If we have injured others through any unjust business transaction, if we have overreached in trade, or defrauded any man, even though it be within the pale of the law, we should confess our wrong, and make restitution as far as lies in our power. It is right for us to restore not only that which we have taken, but all that it would have accumulated if put to a right and wise use during the time it has been in our possession" (Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* [Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1898, 1940], p. 556).

"All heaven is interested in the interview between the one who has been injured and the one who is in error. As the erring one accepts the reproof offered in the love of Christ, and acknowledges his wrong, asking forgiveness from God and from his brother, the sunshine of heaven fills his heart. The controversy is ended; friendship and confidence are restored. The oil of love removes the soreness caused by the wrong; the Spirit of God binds heart to heart; and there is music in heaven over the union brought about.

"As those thus united in Christian fellowship offer prayer to God, and pledge themselves to deal justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God, great blessing comes to them. If they have wronged others, they continue the work of repentance, confession, and restitution, fully set to do good to one another. This is the fulfilling of the law of Christ" (Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers* [Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1915], pp. 499, 500).

"If we have in any manner defrauded or injured our brother, we should make restitution. If we have unwittingly borne false witness, if we have misstated his words, if we have injured his influence in any way, we should go to the ones with whom we have conversed about him, and take back all our injurious misstatements" (Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing* [Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1956], p. 59).

"It will not be long before probation will close. If you do not now serve the Lord with fidelity, how will you meet the record of your unfaithful dealing? . . . If you have refused to deal honestly with God, I beseech you to think of your deficiency, and if possible to make restitution. If this cannot be done, in humble penitence pray that God for Christ's sake will pardon your great debt. Begin now to act like Christians. Make no excuse for failing to give the Lord His own. Now, . . . while it is not yet too late for wrongs to be righted, while it is called today, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts" (Ellen G. White, *The Faith I Live By* [Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1958], p. 132).



Share insights from this week's memory verse and Bible study as well as any discoveries, observations, and questions with your Sabbath School class (or Bible study group). Consider these discussion questions with the rest of the group.



How does the guilt offering symbolically point to Jesus?

What specific sins does Leviticus 5 and 6 require restitution for?

According to Leviticus, what was a person to do if he or she had wronged another?

How is this guilt offering applicable today?

What does the guilt offering teach us about the consequences of sin?

When is guilt good, and when is it bad?

What can we learn about forgiveness and restitution from the story of Zacchaeus? (Luke 19:1–10.)

How do Jesus' blood and restitution set a person free from guilt?