

Numbers 5 - Thursday, May 27th, 2010

- Tonight we find ourselves in Numbers chapter five as we continue our study of this book, chapter by chapter and verse by verse.
- In the previous chapter we studied the organization of God's people, and now in this chapter we'll study the purification of God's people.

1 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 2 "Command the children of Israel that they put out of the camp every leper, everyone who has a discharge, and whoever becomes defiled by a corpse. 3 You shall put out both male and female; you shall put them outside the camp, that they may not defile their camps in the midst of which I dwell." 4 And the children of Israel did so, and put them outside the camp; as the LORD spoke to Moses, so the children of Israel did.

- There are a couple of thoughts here as to why God is commanding them to put out of the camp all of the Israelites who were unclean.
- First, it was out of obedience to what God had commanded that they do back in Leviticus thirteen and also in Leviticus chapter fifteen.
- Second, all uncleanness and impurities had to be removed because the Lord Himself would be present dwelling in their midst.
- Also, the diseases were contagious and could spread throughout the camp, in effect creating a hospital of sorts for those with diseases.

"Probably this ordinance gave the first idea of a *hospital*, where all those who are afflicted with contagious disorders are put into particular wards, under medical treatment."

Adam Clarke

5 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 6 "Speak to the children of Israel: 'When a man or woman commits any sin that men commit in unfaithfulness against the LORD, and that person is guilty, 7 then he shall confess the sin which he has committed. He shall make restitution for his trespass in full, plus one-fifth of it, and give it to the one he has wronged.

- Here the Lord addresses the confessing and renouncing of a specific sin by commanding that restitution be made to the one wronged.
- Not only does everything have to be paid back in full, but there was a penalty of one fifth or twenty percent added to the total amount.
- The reason for this as one noted was because; "restitution leads to restoration," and this is the heart of God in dealing with man's sin.

8 But if the man has no relative to whom restitution may be made for the wrong, the restitution for the wrong must go to the LORD for the priest, in addition to the ram of the atonement with which atonement is made for him. 9 Every offering of all the holy things of the children of Israel, which they bring to the priest, shall be his. 10 And every man's holy things shall be his; whatever any man gives the priest shall be his."

- This seems to indicate that there was no way out of making restitution even when it couldn't be made to the one who was wronged.
- Making restitution was not just to right the wrong against the one to whom the sin was against; it was also for the one who had sinned.
- I believe that God made us in such a way that we are never free from the guilt of our sin until we make restitution and reconciliation.

11 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 12 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'If any man's wife goes astray and behaves unfaithfully toward him, 13 and a man lies with her carnally, and it is hidden from the eyes of her husband, and it is concealed that she has defiled herself, and there was no witness against her, nor was she caught

- We now round a corner and go from the addressing of impurity, to dealing with immorality. Again, God wants His people pure and holy.
- God is going to deal very practically with the sin of adultery on the part of the wife, and the sin of jealousy on the part of the husband.

--14 if the spirit of jealousy comes upon him and he becomes jealous of his wife, who has defiled herself; or if the spirit of jealousy comes upon him and he becomes jealous of his wife, although she has not defiled herself

- It's interesting to note how that God has both sides of this table covered in that He speaks to both justified and unjustified jealousy.
- In other words, the wives can be innocent of the sin of adultery yet the husband can be guilty of the sin of jealousy towards her anyway.

--15 then the man shall bring his wife to the priest. He shall bring the offering required for her, one-tenth of an ephah of barley meal; he shall pour no oil on it and put no frankincense on it, because it is a grain offering of jealousy, an offering for remembering, for bringing iniquity to remembrance.

- Notice the explicit detail with which this is dealt with here. God knows how serious of an issue jealousy is for husbands and wives.
- If the husband was suspicious of his wife, he was not to take matters into his own hands - rather he was to bring her to the priest.
- Also, he was to bring a barley offering but it couldn't have any oil or frankincense on it as was customary when bringing this offering.
- One thought is that without oil and frankincense, the barley would have been bitter symbolizing the bitterness of adultery and jealousy.

16 And the priest shall bring her near, and set her before the LORD. 17 The priest shall take holy water in an earthen vessel, and take some of the dust that is on the floor of the tabernacle and put it into the water. 18 Then the priest shall stand the woman before the LORD, uncover the woman's head, and put the offering for remembering in her hands, which is the grain offering of jealousy. And the priest shall have in his hand the bitter water that brings a curse. 19 And the priest shall put her under oath, and say to the woman, "If no man has lain with you, and if you have not gone astray to uncleanness while under your husband's authority, be free from this bitter water that brings a curse.

- This ceremony of sorts was performed so that the woman being accused of adultery could testify of her innocence under oath.
- The idea here is that if she was indeed found to be innocent, then the bitterness of the curse for her sin would not come upon her.

20 But if you have gone astray while under your husband's authority, and if you have defiled yourself and some man other than your husband has lain with you" --21 then the priest shall put the woman under the oath of the curse, and he shall say to the woman -- "the LORD make you a curse and an oath among your people, when the LORD makes your thigh rot and your belly swell;22 and may this water that causes the curse go into your stomach, and make your belly swell and your thigh rot." Then the woman shall say, "Amen, so be it."

- If the woman was guilty the curse that would come upon her would be pronounced upon her in a symbolic way regarding her womb.
- In other words the rotting of the thigh and the swelling of the belly were a euphemism for the womb of the woman in bearing children.
- Also, notice that there had to be an acknowledgment on the part of the women when at the conclusion she says; "Amen, so be it."

23 Then the priest shall write these curses in a book, and he shall scrape them off into the bitter water. 24 And he shall make the woman drink the bitter water that brings a curse, and the water that brings the curse shall enter her to become bitter. 25 Then the priest shall take the grain offering of jealousy from the woman's hand, shall wave the offering before the LORD, and bring it to the altar;26 and the priest shall take a handful of the offering, as its memorial portion, burn it on the altar, and afterward make the woman drink the water.27 When he has made her drink the water, then it shall be, if she has defiled herself and behaved unfaithfully toward her husband, that the water that brings a curse will enter her and become bitter, and her belly will swell, her thigh will rot, and the woman will become a curse among her people.28 But if the woman has not defiled herself, and is clean, then she shall be free and may conceive children.

- This is where it gets a little interesting. The priest would now make the woman drink this bitter water which would then bring the curse.
- Again, this is rich with both symbolism and typology which I want for us to take just a moment and look at before we finish this chapter.

INFORMATION	APPLICATION
Writing the curses in a book	The curses of sin is written in God's Word
Scraping the curses into the bitter water	The curse of sin adds to the bitter cup
Drinking the bitter water that brings a curse	The drinking of the water of God's Word exposes the curse
Waving the grain offering before the Lord on the altar	The offering of the Savior before the Father was on the cross
Swelling of the belly and the rotting of the thigh	The water of the Word brings inward conviction of rottenness
Freeing to conceive and become fruitful if clean	The water of the Word cleans us and frees us to be fruitful

"It was at the Feast of Tabernacles that they brought Jesus a woman caught in the act of adultery. When His teaching, His pouring forth of the water of the Word was interrupted, He stooped down and wrote in the dust on the floor of the temple compound, eventually freeing the woman to go and sin nor more, (John 8). Thus, all the components of the purification of immorality come together in Jesus. Truly, Jesus came to free us from the curse that causes our walk to be rotten and our bellies to be bloated. We are the woman, But Jesus came to absorb our sin, to set us free and I'm so glad."

Jon Courson

29 This is the law of jealousy, when a wife, while under her husband's authority, goes astray and defiles herself,30 or when the spirit of jealousy comes upon a man, and he becomes jealous of his wife; then he shall stand the woman before the LORD, and the priest shall execute all this law upon her.31 Then the man shall be free from iniquity, but that woman shall bear her guilt."

- This is how God deals with both sides of the matter of suspecting adultery on the wife's part and jealousy on the husband's part.
- Suffice it to say that God not only wants the Israelites to deal with this, He also wants them to resolve this so they can move on.
- I would like to bring this chapter in for a landing by applying the lessons that can be learned as well as the application that can be made.

Five life lessons from Numbers chapter five...

1. God desires to move in our lives, however, it requires our obedience to His orderly organization and total purification.
2. God requires that restitution be made, and a penalty be paid, when we've sinned against Him by sinning against others.
3. God takes impurity seriously which is why He has so much with such detail written about it in the pages of scripture.
4. God knows that jealousy whether justified or not leads to bitterness which defiles and destroys a work or a move of God.
5. God wants adultery and jealousy dealt with specifically and swiftly so He can bless us instead of a curse coming upon us.