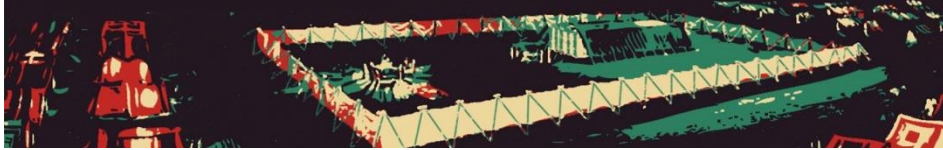


"A Conscience Purged from Dead Works"

Heb. 9; Num. 19

The Tabernacle of Testimony



INTRODUCTION: In Numbers 19, the word *unclean* is used several times (Numbers 19:7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 20, 21, 22). The other word that is used over and over again in this chapter is the word *dead* (Numbers 19:11, 13, 16, 18). Death and sin are inseparably linked together and, therefore, death is the visible sign and the object lesson of sin.

I. THE CAUSES OF AN UNCLEAN CONSCIENCE

A. DELIBERATE ACTS OF SIN (NUMBERS 19:11)

II Corinthians 6:17, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,"

Psalms 19:13, "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression."

Presumptuous sin is sin with your eyes wide open.

B. DEFILING ASSOCIATES OF SIN (NUMBERS 19:14-15)

In this case there is defilement without actual, deliberate contact.

Isaiah 6:5, "Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone (unclean); because I am a man of unclean lips (deliberate acts), and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips (defiling associations): for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts."

C. DECEIVING ACCIDENTS OF SIN (NUMBERS 19:16)

This represents sins that we stumble into. Not presumptuous sin. It is not premeditated.

Psalms 139:23-24, "23 Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: 24 And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

II. THE CONSEQUENCES OF AN UNCLEAN CONSCIENCE

A. THE LOSS OF FELLOWSHIP WITH MAN (NUMBERS 19:20)

B. THE LOSS OF FREEDOM WITH GOD (NUMBERS 19:20)

When a man comes into the house of God, which in this particular day was the Old Testament tabernacle, and he were to come to pray and worship with sin in his heart, it would be an abomination to God. He had no freedom to worship.

Isaiah 59:1-2, "1 Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: 2 But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."

C. THE LOSS OF FRUITFULNESS IN SERVICE (NUM. 19:22; HEB. 9:14)

Not only is he unclean, but he pollutes everything else he touches. If a man's not right with God, rather than ministering life, he'll minister death.

Isaiah 52:11, "Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD."

II Timothy 1:3-5, "3 I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day; 4 Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy; 5 When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also."

III. THE CLEANSING OF AN UNCLEAN CONSCIENCE

A. THE CLEANSING AGENT MUST BE ACCEPTABLE TO GOD (19:1-5)

The cleansing agent was the heifer that was sacrificed. This heifer represents the Lord Jesus Christ. Verse 2 tells us that the heifer was to be without blemish. Verse 2 also tells us that it could not be scarred by the yoke of sin. Verse 3 tells us that it would die outside the gate, outside the camp, as Jesus died. Verse 5, that tells how this heifer was to be burned, speaks of Jesus Christ who endured the fires of the wrath of God for us. And verse 4 speaks of how this perfect sacrifice was offered.

B. THE CLEANSING AGENT MUST BE ACCESSIBLE TO MAN (19:9)

This represents the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ forever deposited in heaven, a clean place, for you and for me. And the ashes were an evidence of the finished sacrifice. They were perpetually preserved for removal of daily sin and its pollution.

These ashes were not used for a person who had never been a Jew, and never been a part of the congregation, in order to get into the congregation. This is not talking about a person having his sins forgiven so he can be saved. Rather, this is talking about a saved person who needs to be cleansed.

C. THE CLEANSING AGENT MUST BE APPLICABLE BY FAITH (19:17-18)

They took the hyssop, which was a plant, and they put it down in the water of ashes, and they used it to sprinkle the water upon the unclean person, and suddenly he was clean.

The running water symbolizes the Word of God. The hyssop, which was one of the most common of shrubs, represents faith. It is the applying agent.