

Numbers Chapter 5 Commentary

1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Command the children of Israel, that they put out of the camp every leper, and every one that hath an issue, and whosoever is defiled by the dead: 3 Both male and female shall ye put out, without the camp shall ye put them; that they defile not their camps, in the midst whereof I dwell. 4 And the children of Israel did so, and put them out without the camp: as the LORD spake unto Moses, so did the children of Israel.

In verses 1-4 we have the picture of purging the church of ungodliness and worldliness. Just as God commanded here, that the defiled, unclean be put outside the camp, God has also commanded the church to do in the New Testament as seen in:

- **2Th 3:6 "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us."**
- **1Ti 6:5 "Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself."**

We see in these texts the same admonition as found here in **Nu 5:1-4**. We should understand that when we say to purge the church, we are not talking about someone who sins and is convicted in their conscience and repents and confesses their sin, not continuing therein. The ones to be put out of the camp are those who indulge in sin and continue therein, even after the church has dealt with them according to scriptural admonition in Matthew chapter 18. A true child of grace will not willingly continue in sin, or if they do, putting them out of the camp is the Lord's way of showing that light and darkness have no fellowship.

We can also make application to our individual hearts, minds, and souls for this text. We should carefully, and with much prayer, purge ourselves of ungodliness. **Ro 6:1 "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"**

Why would God have them remove the unclean out of the camp? God is showing us that as sinfulness, sickness, uncleanness, and etc. all spread and grow. This was God's way of keeping the whole body of Israel healthy. The same thing is applicable to our personal lives, individual churches, and the church in her completeness. Sin is like a cancer, or degenerating disease, like leprosy, that will slowly eat away the body and destroy it. It is likely to spread to others that are in close proximity. Also, God cannot abide sin, therefore, He must have sin removed from his people if he is to be in their midst. **"in the midst whereof I dwell"**

There is an application for this purging on the national level as we see here in Numbers. God was not only talking to the individual tribes but to the whole of Israel, the nation, a picture of the whole church on earth today in time.

We also see the eternal perspective, in the end of time, when God shall separate the saved and unsaved. The unsaved shall be put into the eternal lake of fire, and the saved shall be carried away to heaven and immortal glory.

5 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 6 Speak unto the children of Israel, When a man or woman shall commit any sin that men commit, to do a trespass against the LORD, and that person be guilty;

Notice the trespass is against the Lord. Notice the expression "**and that person be guilty**" Whether we are conflicted by our conscience or in our own hearts, or if we have to be admonished by others to bring us to remembrance, we will "**know**" that we are guilty. We have this knowledge by God's Word of Truth speaking to us in our hearts, minds, and souls.

7 Then they shall confess their sin which they have done: and he shall recompense his trespass with the principal thereof, and add unto it the fifth part thereof, and give it unto him against whom he hath trespassed.

"Then they shall confess their sin which they have done" God tells us in his word of truth in:

- ***Jas 5:16 "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."*** And in:
- ***1Jo 1:9 "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."***

Therefore, we must confess our sins, both to those we sin against, and to God.

"**and he shall recompense his trespass with the principal thereof, and add unto it the fifth part thereof**" Notice that sin is never without cost, and it cost more than the loss it caused. Here, there is the addition of 20% to the price of the damages incurred. Well, I sinned against someone and have gone to them and begged forgiveness. How can I add 20% to that? This is accomplished by going the extra mile, doing above that which is required, to endeavor to make the relationship better than it was before I committed the sin against my brother or sister.

"**and give it unto him against whom he hath trespassed.**" We see here, as we have seen before, that sin against our fellowman is a sin against God. We notice that it doesn't specify here that it is only against God's people but "**against whom**". That being said, we understand that God is addressing his people; to teach them to do right by all mankind, that therein his name might be glorified by our works/walks as seen in ***Mt 5:16 "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."***

8 But if the man have no kinsman to recompense the trespass unto, let the trespass be recompensed unto the LORD, even to the priest; beside the ram of the atonement, whereby an atonement shall be made for him.

"**But if the man have no kinsman to recompense the trespass unto**" How is this applicable? There can be several reasons for this: The person who was sinned against:

- Is gone to some place unknown at the present time so they could only resort to this action.
- Has died.
- Is a stranger, or is a person unknown to us, and either thing mentioned above is applicable.
- Was a stranger just passing through and has moved on.
- It has been a long time past, and we don't know where that person is any longer, or any of various other reasons.

God has covered every situation imaginable, so that the Christian has no excuse for not making confession and restitution for their sins. Ouch! This really steps on my toes. After we have exhausted all means available to make things right, with the one we sinned against, and failing to meet the demand of the law, we must then turn to the Lord to make things right.

"beside the ram of the atonement" We see again, since the sin was not handled quickly enough to be able to recompense the one sinned against, not only is the recompense made to the Lord (the priest) but there is the requirement of the ram of atonement also. The debt of unrequited sin gets bigger and bigger. The lesson being; the sooner we deal with the sin in our lives the better off we will be.

9 And every offering of all the holy things of the children of Israel, which they bring unto the priest, shall be his. 10 And every man's hallowed things shall be his: whatsoever any man giveth the priest, it shall be his.

This is reflecting, what God has commanded already, about the portion for the priests, who is making a sacrifice for sin, and their dedicated portion thereof, as seen in many places in scripture. Here are a some: *Ex 29:28; Le 6:17-18,26; Le 7:6-14; Nu 18:8-9,19; De 18:3-4; Eze 44:29.*

"And every man's hallowed things shall be his" (his is the priest's) We discern by this; there may be things given the priesthood that were not things to be offered as sacrifices. Example: A man destroys another's house and has to make restitution. A house was not to be offered as a sacrifice, so it would become the possession of the Lord through the priesthood's acceptance thereof. The point being; not everything given to the priest was an offering for sacrifice.

How can this principle, of making restitution to the Lord when the offended can't be found, apply to us today? The same as in the earlier comments, the person offended is not available to us for restitution (maybe they died) so we must make our confession of sin, and restitution, to the Lord.

We know and understand that the eternal restitution for our sins has already been made by our High Priest, Saviour and Lord, Jesus Christ. Praise the Lord! Hallelujah! Therefore, we see and understand that this **"Cleaning the Camp"** is applicable to our Christian lives in time.

- How can we clean our own camp? Simply by removing ourselves, in walks and talks, from sinfulness and ungodliness.
- How do we make restitution to our Priest, Jesus Christ? We do this by living the Christian life to the full, doing all things to the glory and praise of the Lord, taking no glory to ourselves.

Since the entire world is the creation of Christ, He is already the possessor of the entire world, and there is no monetary value we can give him; except in things like giving alms to the poor and needy. Remember that Jesus said in: **Mt 25:40 "And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."** Therefore, we see and understand that by living the Christian life to the full, we are letting the light of Christ shine forth through our lives and bringing glory to his Holy Name. We give alms to God by helping: the poor, the widows, the orphans, and etc. We give to the Lord by praising him in all we do and say.

Praise the Lord! Our eternal salvation is fixed, in Christ, and we can't mess that up. Praise the Lord Jesus! He has made a way that when we mess up here in time, there is a way prepared for us to "**clean our camp**" and make restitution to our brothers and sisters in Christ, and be found once again in favorable sight in the eyes of God the Father and his people on the earth. Hallelujah!

As the songster wrote: (273 Old School Hymnal #11 Edition) Tune: Meditation

- 1 I love the sons of grace, The heirs of bliss divine, Who walk in paths of righteousness, And fly from every sin.
- 2 They will my faults reprove, when heedlessly I err; How do I prize their faithful love, Their kind and tender care.
- 3 They Jesus' image bear, How lovely is the sight! They shall at length with Him appear, In everlasting light.
- 4 They love the Father's name, And gladly do His will; They humbly follow Christ, the Lamb, In righteousness and zeal.

Praise the Lord, who has provided a High Priest that we may come to when we sin. Thank God that we have a High Priest, who knows and understands our sinful nature, and who smiles upon us in love and tender mercy. Even though we may be punished for our failure to do right, it is dealt to us in love and tender mercy; as prophesied in the Old Testament and seen in the New Testament:

- ***Isa 53:5 "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."***
- ***1Pe 2:24 "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."***

Why? Because Christ died on the cross in our stead, and God the Father remembers, what Christ did on our behalf, and does not completely destroy us in his judicial wrath. Thank you, Lord Jesus Christ! Praise to your Holy Name!

11 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 12 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man's wife go aside, and commit a trespass against him, 13 And a man lie with her carnally, and it be hid from the eyes of her husband, and be kept close, and she be defiled, and there be no witness against her, neither she be taken with the manner; 14 And the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be defiled: or if the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be not defiled: 15 Then shall the man bring his wife unto the priest, and he shall bring her offering for her, the tenth part of an ephah of barley meal; he shall pour no oil upon it, nor put frankincense thereon; for it is an offering of jealousy, an offering of memorial, bringing iniquity to remembrance. 16 And the priest shall bring her near, and set her before the LORD: 17 And the priest shall take holy water in an earthen vessel; and of the dust that is in the floor of the tabernacle the priest shall take, and put it into the water: 18 And the priest shall set the woman before the LORD, and uncover the woman's head, and put the offering of memorial in her hands, which is the jealousy offering: and the priest shall have in his hand the bitter water that causeth the curse: 19 And the priest shall charge her by an oath, and say unto the woman, If no man have lain with thee, and if thou hast not gone aside to uncleanness with another instead of thy husband, be thou free from this bitter water that causeth the curse: 20 But if thou hast gone aside to another instead of thy husband, and if thou be defiled, and some man have lain with thee beside thine husband: 21 Then the priest shall charge the woman with an oath of cursing, and the priest shall say unto the woman, The LORD make thee a curse and an oath among thy people, when the LORD doth make thy thigh to rot, and thy belly to swell; 22 And this water that causeth the curse

shall go into thy bowels, to make thy belly to swell, and thy thigh to rot: And the woman shall say, Amen, amen. 23 And the priest shall write these curses in a book, and he shall blot them out with the bitter water: 24 And he shall cause the woman to drink the bitter water that causeth the curse: and the water that causeth the curse shall enter into her, and become bitter. 25 Then the priest shall take the jealousy offering out of the woman's hand, and shall wave the offering before the LORD, and offer it upon the altar: 26 And the priest shall take an handful of the offering, even the memorial thereof, and burn it upon the altar, and afterward shall cause the woman to drink the water. 27 And when he hath made her to drink the water, then it shall come to pass, that, if she be defiled, and have done trespass against her husband, that the water that causeth the curse shall enter into her, and become bitter, and her belly shall swell, and her thigh shall rot: and the woman shall be a curse among her people. 28 And if the woman be not defiled, but be clean; then she shall be free, and shall conceive seed. 29 This is the law of jealousies, when a wife goeth aside to another instead of her husband, and is defiled; 30 Or when the spirit of jealousy cometh upon him, and he be jealous over his wife, and shall set the woman before the LORD, and the priest shall execute upon her all this law. 31 Then shall the man be guiltless from iniquity, and this woman shall bear her iniquity.

In verses 11-31, we have a picture of a husband that is jealous of his wife. This is a picture of the church, under the law service, and the many times she went whoring after idols, and was not faithful to her husband, God the Father.

Consider these thoughts: God the Father, the jealous husband, brought the wife before the priest, Jesus Christ, and the due process of the law was accomplished. The bitter water is representative of Israel being made aware that they had rejected the one true and living God by going whoring after idols. When Jesus, incarnate, was brought on the scene of life, in the life of Israel, they rejected Jesus Christ as being the Messiah. This is a picture of the belly swelling and the thigh rotting. When the woman that had sinned was brought forth from the altar of sacrifice and the priest's presence, if her belly was swollen and her thigh rotted, it was evident to all that she was guilty of trespassing against her husband.

We see this picture come to view, as presented by scripture, when the Scribes and Pharisees rejected Christ and had him crucified. Jesus told them they were not his people, and showed they were hiding behind the blanket of religious ritual in: ***Joh 8:42-44; 42 "Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. 43 Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. 44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."***

They had come to believe; they were in charge of their own salvation and did not need a Messiah, they had the ceremonial/sacrificial law system in which they were satisfied. They found much glory for themselves in their works, and they forgot this was about God being the central focus of worship. We see the Scribes and Pharisees, swelled big with their trust in their works and pride of life, as a picture of the swollen belly. We see them crippled and unable to perform their rituals any more, a picture of the rotted thigh, when Christ offered himself a sacrifice for sin on the cross. They didn't even know that this was to be their own demise, with the fulfilling of the sacrificial law through Christ being crucified, that they were affecting.

Remember that in verse 15 the jealous husband was to provide the sacrifice. That is exactly what God did when he sent his only begotten Son into the world. God provided a way, whereby his bride might be found faultless by the sacrifice of his Son. **"And if the woman be not defiled, but be clean; then she shall be free, and shall conceive seed."** This scripture gives us the picture of the Church of Grace emerging from the law service with the finished work of Christ. You see, the Church of Salvation by Grace emerged as the bride of Christ, as one who was not guilty, when the ceremonial/sacrificial law service was ended. The church of grace came forth not guilty by the work of Christ making us acceptable to God the Father. Christ himself drank the bitter water, of the wrath of God the Father against sin, and suffered in our stead. By doing this, Christ, as a sacrifice for sin, suffered all the dreadful wrath of God against every Child of Grace, and appeased the jealousy of the jealous husband, God the Father.

We see that the ceremonial/sacrificial law service, mixed with men's notions and not rightly divided, caused swelling of the belly and rotting of the thigh. We can make application of that principle today in our own Christian lives, and in the life of the Church of Grace, How? You cannot mix **"thus saith the Lord"** with man's notions or wants. If you do, it will cause the belly to swell and the thigh to rot. It is not Christ plus anything that effected (brought to pass) our eternal salvation. It is not **"thus saith the Lord"** plus anything, that allows us to walk in faithfulness before God the Father. We must be wholly committed to our betrothed husband, Jesus Christ, and not found guilty of committing adultery or whoredom, by going after other gods and not trusting fully in the finished work of Christ.

With the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross the words of **Nu 5:31 "Then shall the man be guiltless from iniquity, and this woman shall bear her iniquity."** are brought to light. Christ was the only sacrifice that ever was found sinless, and the law service bore their iniquity, by being abandoned when Christ fulfilled the demand of the law seen in many scriptures listed below:

- **Mt 26:28; Mr 1:4; Lu 1:77; Lu 3:3; Lu 24:47; Ac 2:38; Ac 10:43; Ro 3:25;**
- **Heb 9:22 "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission."**
- **Heb 10:18 "Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin."**

All these scriptures demonstrate that the remission of sin is through Christ alone. This is how the wife of Christ, the Church of Salvation by Grace, is presented pure and chaste to her husband. We see this picture continuing in time, through the preaching of the Gospel of Christ, as men are convicted in their hearts, by hearing the Word of God with understanding and knowledge, and are born again of the Holy Spirit. By the Child of Grace coming to know who Jesus Christ is through salvation by grace.

We rejoice, that the bitter water of sin is changed, into the sweet water of salvation by grace, and that we have a Saviour, a husbandman, that has already made eternal restitution to God the Father, on behalf of the Bride, the Lamb's wife. Praise and Glory to Christ our Saviour! Hallelujah! For Salvation by Grace!