

April 18

Scriptures: Read Leviticus 15

Key Verse: “Thus you shall separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness, lest they die in their uncleanness when they defile My tabernacle that is among them.” (Leviticus 15:31)

Overview

This is an important and practical section of the Israelite code dealing with personal hygiene. More importantly, however, the main purpose of these ruling was that their separation from the surrounding heathen nations and ceremonial holiness would be upheld. It was given by God to teach them, giving specific details as to how a person could become ceremonially unclean because of certain discharges. These requirements promote a constant recognition of God and His holiness in all areas of life. If one was unclean, this meant he or she could not enter the Tabernacle, nor participate in the activities there. These ceremonial laws are no longer effect today, as we are in the New Covenant era, but we can learn certain principles as we remember that all Scripture is God-breathed. (2 Tim. 3:16).

If there was an unnatural discharge of some sort from a man or woman (from infections, hemorrhaging, or a woman’s prolonged menstruation) then they, and everything they came into direct contact with, would be unclean until seven days after it had stopped. Then they were to wash in running water and bring the prescribed offerings (15:13, 14). For the natural discharges, no offerings were necessary; they were only to wash. In the case of a man, he would remain unclean until the next sunset; in the case of a woman, her uncleanness would last for seven days.

In the Gospel of Matthew, we read of a woman who had suffered from an unnatural flow of blood for twelve years. She was therefore unclean and could not participate in religious activities, not could she touch anyone without making them ceremonially unclean as well. Greatly desiring to be restored to communion with God, she rightly perceived this was available through Jesus, so she took the risk of touching the hem of His garment. Our compassionate Lord not only made her well, but also cleansed her (Matt. 9:20-22).

Following the natural act of marriage, the couples were to bathe and then remain unclean until the next sunset. This was to be taken into consideration, since much of community life was involved with worship at the tabernacle. It by no means implies that the marriage act is impure; on the contrary, the Bible teaches that the marriage bed is undefiled (Heb. 13:4). It does necessitate occasional restraint and self-control in this area (Ex. 19:15), considering the things of God first and foremost. In this way, one’s life is kept in balance and in right perspective.

The key verse (verse 31) is addressed directly to the priest. It put great responsibility upon them to teach these regulations, lest anyone in an unclean state enter the tabernacle and thereby defile it, bringing death through God’s justice and wrath. Just as uncleanness separated the Israelites from God, so does sin separate us from Him. Sin is the worst type of uncleanness, for unless atonement is made and forgiveness received, it leads to eternal death. It is a terrible thing to die in sin, but we have been adequately warned by God through His Word concerning those things which bring defilement, and He has graciously provided, through Jesus Christ, a way of cleansing. For “who may stand in His holy place? He who has cleans hands and a pure heart” (Ps. 24:3, 4). Jesus Himself said, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” (Matt. 5:8).

Prayer

Lord God, grant us the gift of Your grace so that we may be separated unto You, not touching the uncleanness of sin. Keep us pure, O Lord.