
a *Grace Notes* course

History II

The Temple

Its Ministry and Services as they were at the time of Christ
by Alfred Edersheim

Lesson 18 – Chapter 18, Post-Mosaic Festivals

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Contents

Chapter 18, On Purificaton.....	1
The Red Heifer	1
The Offering for the Firstborn.....	1
Purification for the Dead	2
The Six Degrees of Defilement	2
Death the Greatest Defilement	2
Levitical Defilement Traceable to Death	3
The Scapegoat, the Red Heifer, and the Living Bird Dipped in Blood.....	3
These Sacrifices Defiled Those Who Took Part In Them.....	3
Significance of the Red Heifer	4
The Sacrifice of the Red Heifer.....	4
Children Used in the Offering.....	5
Purification of the Leper	6
Examination of the Leper	6
Meaning of Leviticus 13:12, 13	6
The Mishnah.....	7
The Second Stage.....	7
Purification from Suspicion of Adultery	8
Regulations as Given in the Mishnah.....	8
Quiz - Instructions.....	9
Questions on The Temple, Lesson 18	10

Instructions for Completing the Lesson

Begin each study session with prayer. It is the Holy Spirit who makes spiritual things discernable to Christians, so it is essential to be in fellowship with the Lord during Bible study.

Instructions

1. Read the lesson notes carefully.
 2. Look up and study each passage of the Bible that is mentioned.
 3. Complete the answers to the QUIZ and send your response to Grace Notes. The instructions for returning the Quiz are at the end of the lesson.
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Chapter 18, On Purification

Festive seasons were not the only occasions which brought worshippers to Jerusalem. Every trespass and sin, every special vow and offering, and every defilement called them to the Temple. All the rites then enjoined are full of deep meaning. Selecting from them those on which the practice of the Jews at the time of Christ casts a special light, our attention is first called to a service, distinguished from the rest by its unique character.

The Red Heifer

The purification from the defilement of death by the ashes of the red heifer (Num 19). In the worship of the Old Testament, where everything was symbolical, that is, where spiritual realities were conveyed through outwards signs, every physical defilement would point to, and carry with it, as it were, a spiritual counterpart. But especially was this the case with reference to birth and death, which were so closely connected with sin and the second death, with redemption and the second birth. Hence, all connected with the origin of life and with death, implied defilement, and required Levitical purification.

But here there was considerable difference. Passing over the minor defilements attaching to what is connected with the origin of life, the woman who had given birth to a child was Levitically unclean for forty or for eighty days, according as she had become the mother of a son or a daughter (Lev 12). After that she was to offer for her purification a lamb for a burnt-, and a turtle-dove, or young pigeon, for a sin-offering; in case of poverty, altogether only two turtle-doves or two young pigeons. We remember that the mother of Jesus availed herself of that provision for the poor, when at the same time she presented in the Temple the Royal Babe, her firstborn son (Luke 2:22).

The Offering for the Firstborn

On bringing her offering, she would enter the Temple through 'the gate of the first-born,' and stand in waiting at the Gate of Nicanor, from the time that the incense was kindled on the golden altar. Behind her, in the Court of the Women, was the crowd of worshippers, while she herself, at the

top of the Levites' steps, which led up to the great court, would witness all that passed in the sanctuary. At last one of the officiating priests would come to her at the gate of Nicanor, and take from her hand the 'poor's offering' (so it is literally called in the Talmud), which she had brought. The morning sacrifice was needed; and but few would linger behind while the offering for her purification was actually made. She who brought it mingled prayer and thanksgiving with the service. And now the priest once more approached her, and, sprinkling her with the sacrificial blood, declared her cleansed. Her 'first-born' was next redeemed at the hand of the priest, with five shekels of silver; ¹ two benedictions being at the same time pronounced, one for the happy event which had enriched the family with a first-born, the other for the law of redemption.

And when, with grateful heart, and solemnised in spirit, she descended those fifteen steps where the Levites were wont to sing the 'Hallel,' a sudden light of heavenly joy filled the heart of one who had long been in waiting 'for the consolation of Israel.' If the Holy Spirit had revealed it to just and devout Simeon, that he 'should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ,' who should vanquish death, it was the same Spirit, who had led him up into the Temple 'when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for Him after the custom of the law.' Then the aged believer took the Divine Babe from His mother's into his own arms. He felt that the faithful Lord had truly fulfilled His word. Content now to depart in peace, he blessed God from the fulness of a grateful heart, for his eyes had seen His salvation--'a light to lighten the Gentiles,' and the 'glory of His people Israel.' But Joseph and Mary listened, wondering, to the words which fell from Simeon's lips.

¹ According to the Mishnah (Beehor. viii. 7) 'of Tyrian weight' = 10 to 12 shillings of our money. The Rabbis lay it down that redemption-money was only paid for a son who was the first-born of his mother, and who was 'suitable for the priesthood,' that is, had no disqualifying bodily blemishes.

Purification for the Dead

Such was the service of purification connected with the origin of life. Yet it was not nearly so solemn or important as that for the removal of defilement from contact with death. A stain attached indeed to the spring of life; but death, which cast its icy shadow from the gates of Paradise to those of Hades, pointed to the second death, under whose ban every one lay, and which, if unremoved, would exercise eternal sway. Hence defilement by the dead was symbolically treated as the greatest of all. It lasted seven days; it required a special kind of purification; and it extended not only to those who had touched the dead, but even to the house or tent where the body had lain, and all open vessels therein. More than that, to enter such a house; to come into contact with the smallest bone, or with a grave; ² even to partake of a feast for the dead (Hosea 9:4), rendered ceremonially unclean for seven days (Num 19:11-16,18; 31:19).

Nay, he who was thus defiled in turn rendered everything unclean which he touched (Num 19:22; comp. Hagg 2:13). For priests and Nazarites the law was even more stringent (Lev 21, etc; comp. Eze 44:25, etc.; Num 6:7, etc.). The former were not to defile themselves by touching any dead body, except those of their nearest kin; the high-priest was not to approach even those of his own parents.

The Six Degrees of Defilement

In general, Jewish writers distinguish six degrees, which they respectively term, according to their intensity, the 'fathers of fathers,' the 'fathers,' and the 'first,' 'second,' 'third,' and 'fourth children of defilement.' They enumerate in all twenty-nine 'fathers of defilement,' arising from various causes, and of these no less than eleven arise from some contact with a dead body.

² According to Jewish tradition, a dead body, however deeply buried, communicated defilement all the way up to the surface, unless indeed it were vaulted in, or vaulted over, to cut off contact with the earth above.

Hence also the law made here exceptional provision for purification. 'A red heifer without spot,' that is, without any white or black hair on its hide, without 'blemish, and on which never yoke came,' was to be sacrificed as a sin-offering (Num 19:9,17), and that outside the camp, not in the sanctuary, and by the son of, or by the presumptive successor to the high-priest. The blood of this sacrifice was to be sprinkled seven times with the finger, not on the altar, but towards the sanctuary; then the whole animal--skin, flesh, blood, and dung--burned, the priest casting into the midst of the burning 'cedarwood, and hyssop, and scarlet.' The ashes of this sacrifice were to be gathered by 'a man that is clean,' and laid up 'without the camp in a clean place.'

But the priest, he that burned the red heifer, and who gathered her ashes, were to be 'unclean until the even,' to wash their clothes, and the two former also to 'bathe,' their 'flesh in water' (Num 19:7,8). When required for purification, a clean person was to take of those ashes, put them in a vessel, pour upon them 'living water,' then dip hyssop in it, and on the third and seventh days sprinkle him who was to be purified; after which he had to wash his clothes and bathe his flesh, when he became 'clean' on the evening of the seventh day. The tent or house, and all the vessels in it, were to be similarly purified. Lastly, he that touched 'the water of separation,' 'of avoidance,' or 'of uncleanness,' was to be unclean until even, and he that sprinkled it to wash his clothes (Num 19:21).

Death the Greatest Defilement

From all these provisions it is evident that as death carried with it the greatest defilement, so the sin-offering for its purification was in itself and in its consequences the most marked. And its application must have been so frequently necessary in every family and circle of acquaintances that the great truths connected with it were constantly kept in view of the people. In general, it may here be stated, that the laws in regard to defilement were primarily intended as symbols of spiritual truths, and not for social, nor yet sanitary purposes, though such results would also flow from them. Sin had rendered fellowship with God impossible; sin was death, and had

wrought death, and the dead body as well as the spiritually dead soul were the evidence of its sway.

Levitical Defilement Traceable to Death

It has been well pointed out (by Sommers, in his *Bibl. Abh.* vol. i. p. 201, etc.), that all classes of Levitical defilement can ultimately be traced back to death, with its two great outward symptoms, the corruption which appears in the skin on the surface of the body, and to which leprosy may be regarded as akin, and the fluxes from the dead body, which have their counterpart in the morbid fluxes of the living body. As the direct manifestation of sin which separates man from God, defilement by the dead required a sin-offering, and the ashes of the red heifer are expressly so designated in the words: 'It is a sin-offering' (Num 9:17).

But it differs from all other sin-offerings. The sacrifice was to be of pure red colour; one 'upon which never came yoke';³ and a female, all other sin-offerings for the congregation being males (Lev 4:14).

These particulars symbolically point to life in its freshness, fulness, and fruitfulness--that is, the fullest life and the spring of life. But what distinguished it even more from all others was, that it was a sacrifice offered once for all (at least so long as its ashes lasted); that its blood was sprinkled, not on the altar, but outside the camp towards the sanctuary; and that it was wholly burnt, along with cedarwood, as the symbol of imperishable existence, hyssop, as that of purification from corruption, and 'scarlet,' which from its colour was the emblem of life.

Thus the sacrifice of highest life, brought as a sin-offering, and, so far as possible, once for all, was in its turn accompanied by the symbols of imperishable existence, freedom from corruption, and fulness of life, so as yet more to intensify its significance. But even this is not all. The gathered ashes with running water were sprinkled on the third and seventh days on that which was to be purified. Assuredly, if death meant 'the wages of

³ The only other instance in which this is enjoined is Deuteronomy 21:3, though we read of it again in 1 Samuel 6:7.

sin,' this purification pointed, in all its details, to 'the gift of God,' which is 'eternal life,' through the sacrifice of Him in whom is the fulness of life.

The Scapegoat, the Red Heifer, and the Living Bird Dipped in Blood

And here there is a remarkable analogy between three sacrifices, which, indeed, form a separate group. The scape-goat, which was to remove the personal guilt of the Israelites--not their theocratic alienation from the sanctuary; the red heifer, which was to take away the defilement of death, as that which stood between God and man; and the 'living bird,' dipped in 'the water and the blood,' and then 'let loose in the field' at the purification from leprosy, which symbolised the living death of personal sinfulness, were all, either wholly offered, or in their essentials completed outside the sanctuary.

In other words, the Old Testament dispensation had confessedly within its sanctuary no real provision for the spiritual wants to which they symbolically pointed; their removal lay outside its sanctuary and beyond its symbols. Spiritual death, as the consequence of the fall, personal sinfulness, and personal guilt lay beyond the reach of the Temple-provision, and pointed directly to Him who was to come.

Every death, every case of leprosy, every Day of Atonement, was a call for His advent, as the eye, enlightened by faith, would follow the goat into the wilderness, or watch the living bird as, bearing the mingled blood and water, he winged his flight into liberty, or read in the ashes sprung from the burning of the red heifer the emblem of purification from spiritual death. Hence, also, the manifest internal connection between these rites. In the sacrifices of the Day of Atonement and of the purified leper, the offering was twofold, one being slain, the other sent away alive, while the purification from leprosy and from death had also many traits in common.

These Sacrifices Defiled Those Who Took Part In Them

Lastly, all these sacrifices equally defiled those who took part in their offering, except in the case of leprosy, where the application would

necessarily only be personal. Hence the high-priest was prohibited from offering the red heifer.

Thus, also, we understand why the red heifer as, so to speak, the most intense of sin-offerings, was wholly burnt outside the camp, and other sin-offerings only partially so (Lev 4:11,12,20, etc.) For this burning signified that 'in the theocracy there was no one, who by his own holiness, could bear or take away the sin imputed to these sin-offerings, so that it was needful, as the wages of sin, to burn the sacrifice which had been made sin' (Keil, *Bibl. Archaeol.* vol. i. p. 283). The ashes of this sin-offering, mixed with living water and sprinkled with hyssop, symbolised purification from that death which separates between God and man.

This parallelism between the blood of Christ and the ashes of an heifer, on the one hand, and on the other between the purification of the flesh by these means, and that of the conscience from dead works, is thus expressed in Hebrews 9:13, 14: 'If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the defiled, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?' And that this spiritual meaning of the types was clearly apprehended under the Old Testament appears, for example, from the reference to it in this prayer of David (Psa 51:7): 'Purge me from sin⁴ (purify me) with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow'; which is again further applied in what the prophet Isaiah says about the forgiveness of sin (Isa 1:18).

Significance of the Red Heifer

This is not the place more fully to vindicate the views here propounded. Without some deeper symbolical meaning attaching to them, the peculiarities of the sin-offering of the red heifer would indeed be well-nigh unintelligible. This must be substantially the purport of a Jewish tradition to the effect that King Solomon, who

⁴ The Hebrew (Piel) form for 'purge from sin' has no English equivalent, unless we were to coin the word 'unsin' or 'unguilt' me--remove my sin.

knew the meaning of all God's ordinances, was unable to understand that of the red heifer.

A 'Haggadah' maintains that the wisest of men had in Ecclesiastes 7:23 thus described his experience in this respect: 'All this have I proved by wisdom,' that is, all other matters; 'I said, I will be wise,' that is, in reference to the meaning of the red heifer; 'but it was far from me.' But if Jewish traditionalism was thus conscious of its spiritual ignorance in regard to this type, it was none the less zealous in prescribing, with even more than usual precision, its ceremonial. The first object was to obtain a proper 'red heifer' for the sacrifice. The Mishnah (Parah, i. ii.) states the needful age of such a red heifer as from two to four, and even five years; the colour of its hide, two white or black hairs springing from the same follicle disqualifying it; and how, if she have been put to any use, though only a cloth had been laid on her, she would no longer answer the requirement that upon her 'never came yoke.'

The Sacrifice of the Red Heifer

Even more particular are the Rabbis to secure that the sacrifice be properly offered (Parah, iii. iv.). Seven days before, the priest destined for the service was separated and kept in the Temple--in 'the House of Stoves'--where he was daily sprinkled with the ashes--as the Rabbis fable--of all the red heifers ever offered. When bringing the sacrifice, he was to wear his white priestly raiments. According to their tradition, there was an arched roadway leading from the east gate of the Temple out upon the Mount of Olives--double arched, that is, arched also over the supporting pillars, for fear of any possible pollution through the ground upwards. Over this the procession passed.

On the Mount of Olives the elders of Israel were already in waiting. First, the priest immersed his whole body, then he approached the pile of cedar-, pine-, and fig-wood which was heaped like a pyramid, but having an opening in the middle, looking towards the west. Into this the red heifer was thrust, and bound, with its head towards the south and its face looking to the west, the priest standing east of the sacrifice, his face, of course, also turned westwards.

Slaying the sacrifice with his right hand, he caught up the blood in his left. Seven times he dipped his finger in it, sprinkling it towards the Most Holy Place, which he was supposed to have in full view over the Porch of Solomon or through the eastern gate. Then, immediately descending, he kindled the fire. As soon as the flames burst forth, the priest, standing outside the pit in which the pile was built up, took cedarwood, hyssop, and 'scarlet' wool, asking three times as he held up each: 'Is this cedarwood? Is this hyssop? Is this scarlet?' so as to call to the memory of every one the Divine ordinance. Then tying them together with the scarlet wool, he threw the bundle upon the burning heifer.

The burnt remains were beaten into ashes by sticks or stone mallets and passed through coarse sieves; then divided into three parts--one of which was kept in the Temple-terrace (the Chel), the other on the Mount of Olives, and the third distributed among the priesthood throughout the land.

Children Used in the Offering

The next care was to find one to whom no suspicion of possible defilement could attach, who might administer purification to such as needed it. For this purpose a priest was not required; but any one--even a child--was fit for the service. In point of fact, according to Jewish tradition, children were exclusively employed in this ministry. If we are to believe the Mishnah (Parah, iii. 2-5), there were at Jerusalem certain dwellings built upon rocks, that were hollowed beneath, so as to render impossible pollution from unknown graves beneath. Here the children destined for this ministry were to be born, and here they were reared and kept till fit for their service.

Peculiar precautions were adopted in leading them out to their work. The child was to ride on a bullock, and to mount and descend it by boards. He was first to proceed to the Pool of Siloam, and to fill a stone cup with its water, and thence to ride to the Temple Mount, which, with all its courts, was also supposed to be free from possible pollutions by being hollowed beneath..

Dismounting, he would approach the 'Beautiful Gate,' where the vessel with the ashes of the red heifer was kept. Next a goat would be brought out,

and a rope, with a stick attached to it, tied between its horns. The stick was put into the vessel with the ashes, the goat driven backwards, and of the ashes thereby spilt the child would take for use in the sacred service so much as to be visible upon the water. It is only fair to add, that one of the Mishnic sages, deprecating a statement which might be turned into ridicule by the Sadducees, declares that any clean person might take with his hand from the vessel so much of the ashes as was required for the service. The purification was made by sprinkling with hyssop.

According to the Rabbis (Parah, xi. 9), three separate stalks, each with a blossom on it, were tied together, and the tip of these blossoms dipped into the water of separation, the hyssop itself being grasped while sprinkling the unclean. The same authorities make the most incredible assertion that altogether, from the time of Moses to the final destruction of the Temple, only seven, or else nine, such red heifers had been offered: the first by Moses, the second by Ezra, and the other five, or else seven, between the time of Ezra and that of the taking of Jerusalem by the Romans. We only add that the cost of this sacrifice, which was always great, since a pure red heifer was very rare,⁵ was defrayed from the Temple treasury, as being offered for the whole people.⁶

Those who lived in the country would, for purification from defilement by the dead, come up to Jerusalem seven days before the great festivals, and, as part of the ashes were distributed among the priesthood, there could never be any difficulty in purifying houses or vessels.

⁵ It might be purchased even from non-Israelites, and the Talmud relates a curious story, showing at the same time the reward of filial piety, and the fabulous amount which it is supposed such a red heifer might fetch.

⁶ Philo erroneously states that the high-priest was sprinkled with it each time before ministering at the altar. The truth is, he was only so sprinkled in preparation for the Day of Atonement, in case he might have been unwittingly defiled. Is the Romish use of 'holy water' derived from Jewish purifications, or from the Greek heathen practice of sprinkling on entering a temple?

Purification of the Leper

After what has already been explained, it is not necessary to enter into details about the purification of the leper, for which this, indeed, is not the place. Leprosy was not merely the emblem of sin, but of death, to which, so to speak, it stood related, as does our actual sinfulness to our state of sin and death before God. Even a Rabbinical saying ranks lepers with those who may be regarded as dead. The other three classes are the blind, the poor, and those who have no children.

They were excluded from 'the camp of Israel,' by which, in later times, the Talmudists understood all cities walled since the days of Joshua, who was supposed to have sanctified them. Lepers were not allowed to go beyond their proper bounds, on pain of forty stripes. For every place which a leper entered was supposed to be defiled. They were, however, admitted to the synagogues, where a place was railed off for them, ten handbreadths high and four cubits wide, on condition of their entering the house of worship before the rest of the congregation, and leaving it after them (Negaim, xiii. 12). It was but natural that they should consort together. This is borne out by such passages as Luke 17:12, which at the same time show how even this living death vanished at the word or the touch of the Saviour.

Examination of the Leper

The Mishnic tractate, Negaim, enters into most wearisome details on the subject of leprosy, as affecting persons or things. It closes by describing the ceremonial at its purification. The actual judgment as to the existence of leprosy always belonged to the priest, though he might consult any one who had knowledge of the matter. Care was to be taken that no part of the examination fell on the Sabbath, nor was any on whom the taint appeared to be disturbed either during his marriage week, or on feast days.

Great precautions were taken to render the examination thorough. It was not to be proceeded with early in the morning, nor 'between the evenings,' nor inside the house, nor on a cloudy day, nor yet during the glare of midday, but from 9 a.m. to 12 o'clock noon, and from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.; according to Rabbi Jehudah, only at 10 or 11

o'clock a.m., and at 2 and 3 o'clock p.m. The examining priest must neither be blind of an eye, nor impaired in sight, nor might he pronounce as to the leprosy of his own kindred. For further caution, judgment was not to be pronounced at the same time about two suspicious spots, whether on the same or on different persons.

Meaning of Leviticus 13:12, 13

A very curious mistake by writers on typology here requires passing notice. It is commonly supposed ⁷ that Leviticus 13:12, 13 refers to cases of true leprosy, so that if a person had presented himself covered with leprosy over 'all his flesh,' 'from his head even to his foot, wheresoever the priest looketh,' the priest was to pronounce: 'He is clean.'

If this interpretation were correct, the priest would have had to declare what was simply untrue! And, mark, it is not a question about cleansing one who had been a leper, but about declaring such an one clean, that is, not a leper at all, while yet the malady covered his whole body from head to foot! Nor does even the doctrinal analogy, for the sake of which this strange view must have been adopted, hold good. For to confess oneself, or even to present oneself as wholly covered by the leprosy of sin, is not yet to be cleansed--that requires purification by the blood of Christ. Moreover, the Old Testament type speaks of being clean, not of cleansing; of being non-leprous, not of being purified from leprosy! The correct interpretation of Leviticus 13:12, 13 evidently is, that an eruption having the symptoms there described is not that of true leprosy at all. ⁸

⁷ All popular writers on typology have fallen into this error. Even the learned Lightfoot has committed it. It is also adopted by Mr. Poole in Smith's Dict. of the Bible (ii. p. 94), and curiously accounted for by the altogether unfounded hypothesis that the law 'imposed segregation' only 'while the disease manifested activity'!

⁸ Even the modified view of Keil, which is substantially adopted in Kitto's Encycl. (3rd edit.), p. 812, that the state described in Leviticus 13:12, 13, 'was regarded as indicative of the crisis, as the whole evil matter thus brought to the surface formed itself into a

But where, in the Divine mercy, one really leprous had been restored, the law (Lev 14) defined what was to be done for his 'purification.' The rites are, in fact, twofold--the first (Lev 14:1-9), to restore him to fellowship with the congregation; the other to introduce him anew to communion with God (Lev 14:10-20). In both respects he had been dead, and was alive again; and the new life, so consecrated, was one higher than the old could ever have been.

The Mishnah

This will appear from an attentive study of the ceremonial of purification, as described in the Mishnah (Negaim, xiii.). The priest having pronounced the former leper clean, a quarter of a log (the log rather less than a pint) of 'living water' was poured into an earthenware dish. Then two 'clean birds' were taken--the Rabbis say two sparrows - of whom one was killed over 'the living water,' so that the blood might drop into it, after which the carcass was buried.

Next, cedar-wood, hyssop, and scarlet wool were taken and tied together (as at the burning of the red heifer), and dipped, along with the living bird, which was seized by the tips of his wings and of his tail, into the blood-stained water, when the person to be purified was sprinkled seven times on the back of his hand, or, according to others, on his forehead. Upon this the living bird was set free, neither towards the sea, nor towards the city, nor towards the wilderness, but towards the fields. Finally, the leper had all the hair on his body shorn with a razor, after which he washed his clothes, and bathed, when he was clean, though still interdicted his house for seven days.

The Second Stage

The first stage of purification had now been completed, and the seven days' seclusion served as preparation for the second stage. The former might take place anywhere, but the latter required the attendance of the purified leper in the sanctuary. It began on the seventh day itself, when the purified leper had again all his hair shorn, as at the first, washed his clothes, and bathed. The Mishnah

scale, which dried and peeled off,' does not meet the requirements of the text.

remarks (Negaim, xiv. 4) that three classes required this legal tonsure of all hair--lepers, Nazarites, and the Levites at their consecration--a parallel this between the purified lepers and the Levites, which appears even more clearly in their being anointed on the head with oil (Lev 14:29), and which was intended to mark that their new life was higher than the old, and that, like Levi, they were to be specially dedicated to God.

Though not of any special importance, we may add that, according to the Mishnah, as in the analogous case of the two goats for the Day of Atonement, the two birds for the leper were to be of precisely the same colour, size, and value, and, if possible, bought on the same day--to mark that the two formed integral parts of one and the same service; the cedar-wood was to be one cubit long and 'the quarter of a bedpost' thick; the hyssop of the common kind, that is, not such as had any other bye-name, as Grecian, Roman, ornamental, or wild; while the scarlet wool was to be a shekel's weight.

The rest of the ceremonial we give in the words of the Mishnah itself (Negaim, xiv. 7, etc.):--'On the eighth day the leper brings three sacrifices--a sin-, a trespass-, and a burnt-offering, and the poor brings a sin- and a burnt-offering of a bird. He stands before the trespass-offering, lays his hands upon it, and kills it. Two priests catch up the blood--one in a vessel, the other in his hand. He who catches it up in the vessel goes and throws it on the side of the altar, and he who catches it in his hand goes and stands before the leper.

And the leper, who had previously bathed in the court of the lepers, goes and stands in the gate of Nicanor. Rabbi Jehudah says:--He needs not to bathe. He thrusts in his head (viz. into the great court which he may not yet enter), and the priest puts of the blood upon the tip of his ear; he thrusts in his hand, and he puts it upon the thumb of his hand; he thrusts in his foot, and he puts it upon the great toe of his foot. Rabbi Jehudah says:--He thrusts in the three at the same time. If he have lost his thumb, great toe, or right ear, he cannot ever be cleansed. Rabbi Eliezer says:--The priest puts it on the spot where it had been. Rabbi Simeon says:--If it be applied on the corresponding left side of the leper's body, it sufficeth.

The priest now takes from the log of oil and pours it into the palm of his colleague--though if he poured it into his own it were valid. He dips his finger and sprinkles seven times towards the Holy of Holies, dipping each time he sprinkles. He goes before the leper; and on the spot where he had put the blood he puts the oil, as it is written, "upon the blood of the trespass-offering." And the remnant of the oil that is in the priest's hand, he pours on the head of him that is to be cleansed, for an atonement; if he so puts it, he is atoned for, but if not, he is not atoned for. So Rabbi Akiba. Rabbi Jochanan, the son of Nuri, saith:--This is only the remnant of the ordinance--whether it is done or not, the atonement is made; but they impute it to him (the priest?) as if he had not made atonement.'

Purification from Suspicion of Adultery

It still remains to describe the peculiar ceremonial connected with the purification of a wife from the suspicion of adultery. Strictly speaking, there was no real offering connected with this. The rites (Num 5:11-31) consisted of two parts, in the first of which the woman in her wave-offering solemnly commended her ways to the Holy Lord God of Israel, thus professing innocence: while in the second, she intimated her readiness to abide the consequences of her profession and appeal to God.

Both acts were symbolical, nor did either of them imply anything like an ordeal. The meat-offering which she brought in her hand symbolised her works, the fruit of her life. But owing to the fact that her life was open to suspicion, it was brought, not of wheat, as on other occasions, but of barley-flour, which constituted the poorest fare, while, for the same reason, the customary addition of oil and frankincense was omitted. Before this offering was waved and part of it burned on the altar, the priest had to warn the woman of the terrible consequences of a false profession before the Lord, and to exhibit what he spoke in a symbolical act.

He wrote the words of the curse upon a roll; then, taking water out of the laver, in which the daily impurities of the priests were, so to speak, symbolically cleansed, and putting into it dust of the sanctuary, he washed in this mixture the writing of the curses, which were denounced upon

the special sin of which she was suspected. And the woman, having by a repeated Amen testified that she had quite apprehended the meaning of the whole, and that she made her solemn appeal to God, was then in a symbolical act to do two things.

First, she presented in her meat-offering, which the priest waved, her life to the heart-searching God, and then, prepared for the consequences of her appeal, she drank the bitter mixture of the threatened curses, assured that it could do no harm to her who was innocent, whereas, if guilty, she had appealed to God, judgment would certainly at some time overtake her, and that in a manner corresponding to the sin which she had committed.

Regulations as Given in the Mishnah

According to the Mishnah, which devotes to this subject a special tractate (Sotah), a wife could not be brought to this solemn trial unless her husband have previously warned her, in presence of two witnesses, against intercourse with one whom he suspected, and also two witnesses had reported that she had contravened his injunction. The Rabbis, moreover, insist that the command must have been express, that it only applied to intercourse out of reach of public view, and that the husband's charge to his wife before witnesses should be preceded by private and loving admonition.⁹

But if, after all this, she had left such warning unheeded, her husband had first to bring her before the Sanhedrim of his own place, who would dispatch two of their scholars with the couple to Jerusalem, where they were to appear before the Great Sanhedrim. The first endeavour of that tribunal was to bring the accused by any means to make confession. If she did so, she only lost what her husband had settled upon her, but retained her own portion.

According to Rabbinical law adulteresses only suffered death if they persisted in the actual crime after having been warned of the consequences by

⁹ The tractate Sotah enters into every possible detail, with purient casuistry--the tendency, as always in Jewish criminal law, being in favour of the accused.

two witnesses. It is evident that this canon must have rendered the infliction of the death penalty the rarest exception--indeed, almost inconceivable.

If she persisted in her innocence, she was brought through the eastern gate of the Temple, and placed at the gate of Nicanor, where the priest tore off her dress to her bosom, and dishevelled her hair. If she wore a white dress, she was covered with black; if she had ornaments, they were taken from her, and a rope put round her neck. Thus she stood, exposed to the gaze of all, except her own parents. all this to symbolise the Scriptural warning (Isa 65:7): 'Therefore I will measure their former work into their bosom'; for in what had been her pride and her temptation she was now exposed to shame. The priest was to write, in ink, Numbers 5:19-22, of course leaving out the introductory clauses in verses 19 and 21, and the concluding 'Amen.' The woman's double response of Amen bore reference first to her innocence, and secondly to the threatened curse.

The waving of the woman's offering was done in the usual manner, but opinions differ whether she had to drink 'the bitter water' before or after part of her offering had been burned on the altar. If before the writing was washed into the water she refused to take the test, her offering was scattered among the ashes; similarly, if she confessed herself guilty. But if she insisted on her innocence after the writing was washed, she was forced to drink the water.

The Divine judgment was supposed to overtake the guilty sooner or later, as some thought, according to their other works. The wave-offering belonged to the priest, except where the suspected woman was the wife of a priest, in which case the offering was burned. If a husband were deaf or insane, or in prison, the magistrates of the place would act in his stead in insisting on a woman clearing herself of just suspicion. An adulteress was prohibited from living with her seducer. It is beside our purpose further to enter into the various legal determinations of the Mishnah.

But it is stated that, with the decline of morals in Palestine, the trial by the 'water of jealousy' gradually ceased (in accordance with what we read in Hosea 4:14), till it was finally abolished by Rabbi Jochanan, the son of Zacchai, some time after the death of our Lord. While recording this fact the Mishnah (Sotah, ix. 9-15) traces, in bitter language, the decay and loss of what had been good and precious to Israel in their worship, Temple, wisdom, and virtues, pointing forward to the yet greater sorrow of 'the last day,' 'shortly before the coming of Messiah,' when all authority, obedience, and fear of God would decline in the earth, and 'our only hope and trust' could spring from looking up to our Heavenly Father. Yet beyond it stands out, in the closing words of this tractate in the Mishnah, the final hope of a revival, of the gift of the Holy Spirit, and of the blessed resurrection, all connected with the long-expected ministry of Elijah!

Quiz - Instructions

The following questions relate to your study of this lesson.

Respond to the questions as required.

You have choices about sending the quiz back to Grace Notes.

- If you received an email file containing the questions, you can use the REPLY feature of your e-mail application to open the file. Enter your responses in the reply message. Then SEND the message to Grace Notes.
- You can enter your answers on these pages, then send the whole file back to Grace Notes as a file attachment. This is handy, but these lessons will average 100K to 200K in size. As an alternative,
- After you answer the questions here, copy and paste the whole list of questions into a new MS Word document; then, send the new file to Grace Notes as an attachment. The new file will, of course, be much smaller than this main file.
- Finally, you can print the Quiz pages on your printer and send your response back to Grace Notes in the regular mail. If you do this, send the mail to:

Grace Notes

% Warren Doud

1705 Aggie Lane

Austin, Texas 78757 USA

Whichever transmission method you use, when Grace Notes receives your response, we will send you the next lesson in the series.

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Questions on The Temple, Lesson 18

1. In the Old Testament, spiritual realities were taught through _____.

Answer:

2. When a woman gave birth to a daughter, how long was the ceremonial uncleanness to last?

Answer:

3. How much money was given in the offering for the first born?

Answer:

4. To come into any kind of contact with the dead caused uncleanness that lasted for _____ days.

Answer:

5. Where were the ashes of the red heifer offering to be placed?

Answer:

6. The priests who burned the red heifer or gathered the ashes were declared unclean because of the sin they had committed. [True/False]

Answer:

7. The High Priest was not permitted to participate in administering the red heifer offering. [True/False]

Answer:

8. What scripture in the New Testament shows the relationship between the red heifer offering and the sacrifice of Christ?

Answer:

9. What four classes of people were regarded as dead, in the Jewish traditional literature?

Answer:

10. In the Jewish society, a woman who was convicted of adultery lost all of her property. [True/False]

Answer:

End of Quiz
