

Numbers 5 Commentary

PREVIOUS

NEXT

CLICK VERSE

To go directly to that verse

Click for Numbers Chapters 1-36

- Numbers 5:1
- Numbers 5:2
- Numbers 5:3
- Numbers 5:4
- Numbers 5:5
- Numbers 5:6
- Numbers 5:7
- Numbers 5:8
- Numbers 5:9
- Numbers 5:10
- Numbers 5:11
- Numbers 5:12
- Numbers 5:13
- Numbers 5:14
- Numbers 5:15
- Numbers 5:16
- Numbers 5:17
- Numbers 5:18
- Numbers 5:19
- Numbers 5:20
- Numbers 5:21
- Numbers 5:22
- Numbers 5:23
- Numbers 5:24
- Numbers 5:25
- Numbers 5:26
- Numbers 5:27
- Numbers 5:28
- Numbers 5:29
- Numbers 5:30
- Numbers 5:31

Numbers: Journey to God's Rest-Land by Irving Jensen- used by permission

Source: Ryrie Study Bible

THE BOOK OF NUMBERS "Wilderness Wandering"								
WALKING Numbers 1-12			WANDERING Numbers 13-25			WAITING Numbers 26-36		
Counting & Camping Nu 1-4	Cleansing & Congregation Nu 5-8	Carping & Complaining Nu 9-12	12 Spies & Death in Desert Nu 13-16	Aaron & Levites in Wilderness Nu 17-18	Serpent of Brass & Story of Balaam Nu 21-25	Second Census 7 Laws of Israel Nu 26-30	Last Days of Moses as Leader Nu 31-33	Sections, Sanctuaries & Settlements Nu 34-36
Law & Order			Rebellion & Disorder			New Laws for the New Order		

Old Generation	Tragic Transition	New Generation
Preparation for the Journey: Moving Out	Participation in the Journey: Moving On	Prize at end of the Journey: Moving In
At Sinai Mt Sinai	To Moab Mt Hor	At Moab Mt Nebo
En Route to Kadesh (Mt Sinai)	En Route to Nowhere (Wilderness)	En Route to Canaan (Plains of Moab)
A Few Weeks to 2 Months	38 years, 3 months, 10 days	A Few Months
Christ in Numbers = Our "Lifted-up One" (Nu 21:9, cp Jn 3:14-15)		
Author: Moses		

Numbers 5:1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

- [Numbers 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

NET Note The fifth chapter falls into four main parts:

1. separation of the unclean (vv. 1–4),
2. restitution for sin (vv. 5–10),
3. the jealousy ordeal (vv. 11–28),
4. the summary (vv. 29–31).

KEEP THE CAMP CLEAN!

What the Bible Teaches - The first section of the book of Numbers (chs. 1-4) has to do with the external organisation of the Camp of Israel. This chapter deals more with the purity of the Camp itself. The Camp had to be cleansed from defilement. External order and correctness has its important place in a company of believers, but if there is not the definite sense of the holiness of God, and personal purity of life is not attended to, then there is an inconsistency which is not pleasing to God.

Irving Jensen - The first four chapters record the directions which Jehovah gave Moses regarding preparation for the journey as related especially to the community of the camp as a whole. In chapter 1 the instruction was, "Count the warriors of the camp"; in chapter 2, "Arrange the tribes in the camp"; and in chapters 3 and 4, "Take care of the tabernacle of the camp." Now the directions were aimed more at individuals within the camp.. Put Out the Unclean (5:1–4) (Everyman's Bible Commentary-Numbers)

McGee - We have seen the orderly arrangement of the camp which was a preparation for the wilderness march. There had to be this preparation. The Christian today needs to recognize that he is a pilgrim going through the wilderness of this world. Everything and everyone must be in his place for the walk, the work, the war, and the worship of the wilderness. We come now to instructions concerning cleansing the camp, which includes chapters 5 through 8. As we come to this section on the cleansing of the camp, we need to recognize that the reason for cleansing is that they (and we) are serving a holy God. (Thru the Bible)

Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying

Numbers 5:2 "Command the sons of Israel that they send away from the camp every leper and everyone having a discharge and everyone who is unclean because of a dead person.

BGT Numbers 5:2 πρ σταξον το ς υ ο ς Ισραηλ κα εξαποστειλ τωσαν κ τ ς παρεμβολ ς π ντα λεπρ ν κα π ντα γονορρυ κα π ντα κ θαρτον π ψυχ

NET Numbers 5:2 "Command the Israelites to expel from the camp every leper, everyone who has a discharge, and whoever becomes defiled by a corpse.

NLT Numbers 5:2 "Command the people of Israel to remove from the camp anyone who has a skin disease or a discharge, or who has become ceremonially unclean by touching a dead person.

ESV Numbers 5:2 "Command the people of Israel that they put out of the camp everyone who is leprous or has a discharge and everyone who is unclean through contact with the dead.

NIV Numbers 5:2 "Command the Israelites to send away from the camp anyone who has an infectious skin disease or a discharge of any kind, or who is ceremonially unclean because of a dead body.

KJV Numbers 5:2 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:

YLT Numbers 5:2 'Command the sons of Israel, and they send out of the camp every leper, and every one with an issue, and every one defiled by a body;

LXE Numbers 5:2 Charge the children of Israel, and let them send forth out of the camp every leper, and every one who has in issue of the reins, and every one who is unclean from a dead body.

- **send away from the camp:** Nu 12:14 Lev 13:46 De 24:8,9 2Ki 7:3
- **and everyone:** Lev 15:2-27
- **who:** Nu 9:6-10 19:11-16 31:19 Lev 21:1
- [Numbers 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Lev 15:1-3 The LORD also spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, 2 "Speak to the sons of Israel, and say to them, 'When any man has a discharge from his body, his discharge is unclean. 3 'This, moreover, shall be his uncleanness in his discharge: it is his uncleanness whether his body allows its discharge to flow or whether his body obstructs its discharge.

Lev 21:11 nor shall he approach any dead person, nor defile himself even for his father or his mother;

GOD COMMANDS IMPURITY BE REMOVED

Brian Bell - The lesson taught here is for the necessity for the purity of the people, as they were to enter into possession of the land. Each step reminded Israel of their calling as a holy people serving a holy God. Each step demonstrated their commitment to being different than the people they were sent to displace.

Wiersbe - The concepts of "clean" and "unclean" were vital to daily life in Israel. Cleanliness involved much more than personal hygiene; it involved being acceptable to God in what they ate, what they wore, and how they conducted themselves at home and in public. The Israelites were in the infancy of their faith, and God used familiar pictures to teach them spiritual truth. He compared sin to disease and defilement and holiness to health and cleanliness (Lev. 11–15). Unclean people were put out of the camp until they had met the ceremonial requirements for reentry.

[Thompson](#) - If we were to poll Christianity and ask them to list the attributes of God in order of importance, I am sure at the top of the list would be God's love. I am certain that this would rank high on the list of God's attributes. But the truth is the one attribute that the Bible actually mentions the most is God's Holiness, not God's love. When Isaiah was taken to the throne of God and saw God high and lifted up, the angels were not crying out "Love, Love, Love," they were crying "Holy, Holy, Holy" (Is. 6:3). When the Apostle John was taken up into heaven to see the throne of God, the four living Creatures were not crying "Love, Love, Love," but "Holy, Holy, Holy is the LORD God the Almighty" (Rev. 4:8). God is a holy God and if He is going to bless His people, He demands they be holy. This point was clearly something God wanted Israel to understand as they were about to pack up and head to the Promised Land. God wanted His people to realize if you want My blessings and My powerful presence, you must be clean. This is not a nice little suggestion; this is a demand of God. This point is true regardless of the dispensation.

[Robert Rayburn](#) - We now turn to the purity of the people themselves. Israel is to be a holy people, holy because Yahweh is holy. Her camp where the sanctuary of God is located must be pure because he is there and so efforts are made to address that need, both ceremonially and morally,

Command the sons of Israel that they send away from the camp- These people were not cut off from Israel, but just sent outside the area of the camp. It would be like a quarantine outside the outer perimeter of the camp. . Leviticus 13-14 describes the process of purification by which people could be restored to the camp of the holy.

Gilbrant - Out of the camp. This is a brief compendium of the laws of cleanliness in Leviticus 13 to 15. There is a curious difference. In Leviticus, the sick are to be isolated; here they are to be excluded from the camp until they are well. The difference is not that the law changed, but that the camp had changed. At Sinai, the people were settled with their flock coming and going for pasture. When Israel was organized for travel, the quarantine involved exclusion so as to be effective....Possible reasons for these laws of uncleanness have been thoroughly discussed, but the view that God gave them to his people in the interests of public health seems to fit all the data. God had promised to keep them from the diseases of the Egyptians (Exo. 15:26). The best method to halt the spread of disease in ancient times was quarantine. But there were no rules like these in other ancient cultures as far as we know.

MacArthur - All of these prohibitions had sensible health benefits as well as serving to illustrate the need for moral cleanliness when approaching God.

NET Note - The construction uses the Piel imperative (**command**) followed by this Piel imperfect/jussive form (**send away**); it is here subordinated to the preceding volitive, providing the content of the command. The verb שָׁלַח (shalakh) in this verbal stem is a strong word, meaning “expel, put out, send away, or release” (as in “let my people go”).

Every leper - This is not necessarily classic leprosy like we refer to it today, but included a wide range of skin conditions, ranging from eczema to true leprosy (Hansen's disease).

McGee - They were to put the leper out of the camp. That may seem cruel to us, but there was a very definite reason for it. There was the danger of contamination and transmission of disease. God commanded that certain ones were to be put out of the camp. This was not done by those who thought they were superior or wanted to assert their spiritual prerogatives. It was by God's command. (bid)

THOUGHT - We need to recognize that if we are going to walk with God, if we are going to have fellowship with Him, there must be a cleansing of our lives. Recently I heard of a preacher who died as an alcoholic, yet people talked about what a blessing he was. I discount that, because God is not a fool. He does not bless nor will He walk with us when we are living in conscious sin. “For our God is a consuming fire” (Heb. 12:29). “God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him” (Ps. 89:7). Today a great deal of the problems and difficulties and sickness and heartache is caused by Christian people who will not deal with the sin in their lives. In our churches today, we shut our eyes to sin in the lives of the people. (McGee)

Wiersbe - Scholars aren't agreed on what leprosy was in ancient days, and some modern translations prefer “infectious skin disease.” Whatever it was, leprosy was a dreaded disease that made the victims ceremonially unclean. They had to live outside the camp, and if anybody approached them, they had to cry out, “Unclean, unclean!” (See Lev. 13.) If they were cured, they had to go through a lengthy process of cleansing before being admitted back into the camp (Lev. 14).

NET Note on leper - The word צָרַעַת (tsarua'), although translated “leper,” does not primarily refer to leprosy proper (i.e., Hansen's disease). The RSV and the NASB continued the KJV tradition of using “leper” and “leprosy.” More recent studies have concluded that the Hebrew word is a generic term covering all infectious skin diseases (including leprosy when that actually showed up). True leprosy was known and feared certainly by the time of Amos (ca. 760 B.C.). There is evidence that the disease was known in Egypt by 1500 B.C. So this term would include that disease in all probability. But in view of the diagnosis and healing described in Leviticus 13 and 14, the term must be broader. The whole basis for the laws of separation may be found in the book of Leviticus. The holiness of the LORD who dwelt among his people meant that a high standard was imposed on them for their living arrangements as well as access to the sanctuary. Anything that was corrupted, diseased, dying, or contaminated was simply not compatible with the holiness of God and was therefore excluded. This is not to say that it was treated as sin, or the afflicted as sinners. It simply was revealing—and safeguarding—the holiness of the LORD. It thus provided a revelation for all time that in the world to come nothing unclean will enter into the heavenly sanctuary. As the Apostle Paul says, we will all be changed from this corruptible body into one that is incorruptible (1 Cor 15:53). So while the laws of purity and holiness were practical for the immediate audience, they have far-reaching implications for theology. The purity regulations have been done away with in Christ—the problem is dealt with differently in the new covenant. There is no earthly temple, and so the separation laws are not in force. Wisdom would instruct someone with an infectious disease to isolate, however. But just because the procedure is fulfilled in Christ does not mean that believers today are fit for glory just as they are. On the contrary, they must be changed before going into his presence. In like manner the sacrifices have been done away in Christ—not what they covered. Sin is still sin, even though it is dealt with differently on this side of the cross. But the ritual and the regulations of the old covenant at Sinai have been fulfilled in Christ.

Send away (07971)(shalach means to send, to send forth, to send away, to let go, to put, to expel. It is notable that the first use in Ge 3:22 describes Adam as he **stretched** out his hand to take of the forbidden fruit. The second use in Ge 3:23 describes God's punishment - "God **sent** him **out** (shalach) from the Garden."

Uses in Numbers - Num. 5:2; Num. 5:3; Num. 5:4; Num. 13:2; Num. 13:3; Num. 13:16; Num. 13:17; Num. 13:27; Num. 14:36; Num. 16:12; Num. 16:28; Num. 16:29; Num. 20:14; Num. 20:16; Num. 21:6; Num. 21:21; Num. 21:32; Num. 22:5; Num. 22:10; Num. 22:15; Num. 22:37; Num. 22:40; Num. 24:12; Num. 31:4; Num. 31:6; Num. 32:8;

and everyone having a discharge - A **discharge** would be a bodily emission and most think this refers primarily to the sexual organs.

Wiersbe on discharge - The discharge might be natural (Lev 15:16–18, 25–30) or unnatural (Lev 15:1–15, 19–24), but it still made the people unclean. Some of these discharges might be caused by venereal diseases or other infections which would make the people toxic, so isolating them helped to maintain the health of the camp.

Discharge (02100)(zub) was a verb meaning to gush, flow. **TWOT** says "The basic idea is a movement of liquid, flowing from one location to another. The root is used only in the Qal stem. It occurs fifty-four times, including both the verb and noun. The word usually occurs in one of three contexts. 1. The movement of water in a stream. Water is said to have "gushed forth from the rock struck by Moses in the wilderness (Psalm 78:20; cf Psalm 105:41; Isaiah 48:21). 2. A characteristic description of Palestine: it is said to be "flowing" with milk and honey. This phrase occurs many times in the OT (e.g. Exodus 3:8, 17; Exodus 13:5; Exodus 33:3; Deut. 6:3; Deut. 11:9, etc.). 3. A discharge, pathological or normal, from the genito-urinary tract. With three exceptions, Leviticus 22:4; Numbers 5:2; 2 Samuel 3:29, all usages appear in Leviticus 15. It is used in Leviticus 15:2-15, 32-33 (verb eleven times, noun seven) to refer to a diseased "discharge" from a man (possibly including diarrhea); in Leviticus 15:19-24 (verb once, noun once) to the discharge of a woman's menstrual period; and in Leviticus 15:25-30 (verb once, noun five times) to an unnatural discharge of blood from a woman." (L.J.W)

Zub can be used for the movement of water in a stream or along the ground. All three OT instances of this use refer to the water which gushed from the rock when Moses struck it in the wilderness. (Ps 78:20, Ps 105:41, Isa 48:21) **Zub** also appears in the common phrase "**flowing** with milk and honey," used most often of the Promised Land of Palestine (Exo. 3:8; Nu 13:27; Nu 16:13, Dt. 6:3).

Zub - 40v - Exod. 3:8; Exod. 3:17; Exod. 13:5; Exod. 33:3; Lev. 15:2; Lev. 15:4; Lev. 15:6; Lev. 15:7; Lev. 15:8; Lev. 15:9; Lev. 15:11; Lev. 15:12; Lev. 15:13; Lev. 15:19; Lev. 15:25; Lev. 15:32; Lev. 20:24; Lev. 22:4; Nu 5:2; Nu 13:27; Nu 14:8; Nu 16:13; Nu 16:14; Deut. 6:3; Deut. 11:9; Deut. 26:9; Deut. 26:15; Deut. 27:3; Deut. 31:20; Jos. 5:6; 2 Sam. 3:29; Ps. 78:20; Ps. 105:41; Isa. 48:21; Jer. 11:5; Jer. 32:22; Jer. 49:4; Lam. 4:9; Ezek. 20:6; Ezek. 20:15

ISBE on "discharge" - [Heb. zôb] (Lev. 15:1-33; Lev 22:4, 22; Nu. 5:2; 2 Sa 3:29); AV ISSUE. Not all the discharges mentioned in Lev. 15 would be infectious, but making a distinction between infectious and noninfectious would necessitate microscopic examination not available until modern times, so the course of treating all discharges alike was then the safest one. The Levitical laws for controlling gonorrhea, source of the main infectious discharge in view, were among the earliest recorded. Vivid descriptions of the disease are to be found also on second-millennium B.C. Assyrian tablets. Lev. 15:19–24 refers to menstruation.

Jensen - Three cases of uncleanness are cited: the leper, the one with a running issue, and the one defiled by the dead. Apart from any hygienic reasons, the directions for such purging reflect the ways of God in speaking to the Israelites. They thought in terms of the concrete and the visible, and so God continually used the visible, the tangible, and the audible to make clear His message. Here was a threefold reminder that God did not want habitual sinners in the camp: The leper was a picture of the awfulness and ugliness of sin. The running issue was a reminder of sin unhealed and taking its toll. Defilement by a dead body was a reminder of the ultimate result of sin, eternal death. (Ibid)

and everyone who is unclean because of a dead person - Obviously because of touching a dead person (the word "dead" is not actually in the Hebrew text).. Considering that they had 2 million people in the camp, it was likely that every day someone would come in contact with a dead person.

Mattoon - If a person prepared a body for burial, he was certified as unclean for a week. This is the reason for the tombs being whitened in New Testament times. The solution to those who were defiled were to be **quarantined** and put out of the camp. This medical practice was discovered or understood 3400 years later by the medical society as an effective method for dealing with contagious diseases. The Bible is the only ancient book to insist on this practice. Why? The Bible is the Word of God!

Wiersbe - The law concerning defilement by the dead is spelled out in Numbers 19:11–22 and Leviticus 21:1–4. The decayed carcass of an animal was likely to be contaminated and therefore able to spread disease, but even human corpses were considered unclean. Those who prepared their loved ones for burial were ceremonially unclean for a week and had to go through ritual

cleansing before being received back into the camp.

NET Note on person - The word is נֶפֶשׁ (nefesh), which usually simply means “[whole] life,” i.e., the soul in the body, the person. But here it must mean the corpse, the dead person, since that is what will defile (although it was also possible to become unclean by touching certain diseased people, such as a leper).

Unclean (02931) (**tame**) describes that which is (ceremonially) defiled or impure, ritually impure and unfit for use or consumption. It describes that which is not cleansed in a ceremonial sense and that which must be abstained from according to the Levitical law, lest impurity be contracted. **Lawrence Richards** explains that **tame** “designates ceremonial (ritual) uncleanness in the early books. Later the prophets use the term primarily of moral impurity. In the early books of the OT, cleanness and uncleanness are ritual issues. That is, calling a person or thing “unclean” was not a moral judgment. “Unclean” meant simply that a person or thing was unable to participate in Israel’s worship of Yahweh. During the time of ceremonial uncleanness, one could not attend any worship ceremony or eat meat that had been offered in sacrifice (Nu 5:1-4; 9:6-12). Under certain circumstances an unclean person must be isolated from others in the community (Lev 13:45-46)... The rules concerning the clean and the unclean seem to draw attention to central issues in human experience—to birth, death, sex, health, and food. In so doing, **these ritual issues graphically demonstrated God’s concern for everything in His people’s earthly life**... What we conclude is that Israel’s God sets apart what he chooses for his people, and he sets them apart from whatever he rejects. Israel is God’s people. **Everything in their daily life is to testify to their exclusive commitment to the Lord**. Ceremonial and ritual uncleanness cut off an individual from participation in worship of the Lord. The lesson is clear: **one must be clean to approach a holy God**. (New International Encyclopedia of Bible Words) (Bolding added for emphasis)

THOUGHT - In all three examples of defilement/uncleanness, God was trying to teach Israel of their call to be holy as He is holy. The same call applies to believers today, Paul writing “Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” (2 Cor 7:1+).

NIV SB - In the new Jerusalem (Rev 21:2-3) the dwelling of God with his people will be uncompromised by any form of uncleanness (Rev 21:27+).

and **nothing unclean**, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

Question: [What are the bodily discharges mentioned in Leviticus 15, and why did they make a person unclean?](#)

Answer: There are four types of bodily discharges mentioned in Leviticus 15, and all four rendered one “unclean” for at least seven days and required sacrifices to be declared “clean” again. The four types of discharge are 1) a chronic male discharge (verses 1–15), 2) emissions of semen (verses 16–18), 3) a woman’s discharge during menstruation (verses 19–24), and 4) a chronic female [issue of blood](#) (verses 25–30). The chronic male discharge was most likely due to some kind of venereal disease, so all four bodily discharges have to do with fertility (or periods of infertility) and the proper function of the sexual organs.

The Law does not give a direct reason for the rules concerning bodily discharges, but a verse near the end of Leviticus 15 gives the best hint: “So they will not die in their uncleanness for defiling my dwelling place, which is among them” (Leviticus 15:31). The question naturally arises, why should discharges from sex organs put someone at risk of death for defiling the sanctuary?

The answer is most likely related to the analogy between the “one-flesh relationship” of a man and woman, and the desired relationship between God and His people. The prophets often spoke of idolatry in Israel as “adultery,” in view of the fact that God had chosen Israel as a holy people unto Himself. The rite of [circumcision](#) was given to Abraham in Genesis 17. Thus, all the males among God’s people were to be physically marked (on the sexual organ) as set apart for the Lord. Abraham and all his “seed” were to “walk before me faithfully and be blameless” (Genesis 17:1). In light of circumcision as a covenantal sign, an entire chapter devoted to the productivity and proper use of the sexual organs (Leviticus 15) doesn’t seem so out of place.

The very first command to Adam was “be fruitful and increase in number” (Genesis 1:28). After sin entered the world through Adam, Abraham and his miraculous seed were to fulfill Adam’s commission to “be fruitful” as God’s representative on earth (see Genesis 12:2–3). From the beginning, nothing bore greater witness to the God of Creation than the proper means of procreation; so, when the Law was given, the children of Israel were instructed to take seriously the proper and productive use of their sexual organs—all four bodily discharges in Leviticus 15 are “markers” of inappropriate or unproductive use of those organs, just as circumcision “marked” one as a “separated” child of God through the seed of Abraham.

During periods of uncleanness (of which the bodily discharges were a sign), sexual activity was unfruitful and least likely to be honoring to God, and so God forbade physical contact, including sexual activity, with the “unclean.” Leviticus 15 also enforced the ongoing awareness among God’s people of their need to remain set apart for Him alone. In times of uncleanness, God’s people were to have an eager desire to return to full productivity for God’s sake among the nations, given that He had made His “dwelling place” among them (verse 31).

The Law’s added requirement of cleansing and sacrifice once the bodily discharges had ended was primarily to express the individual’s re-consecration to God. The cleansed were “betrothed” to God and spiritually “fertile”; they were “separated” to God and desired to increase their tribe and thus publish God’s name throughout the whole earth.

Christians are not under the Law (Romans 6:14) and are not bound by the Law’s strict requirements concerning circumcision, bodily discharges, and sexual activity. However, we are still a “sanctified” people in that we are set apart in Christ to be holy—we are God’s sanctuary now. As such, we are to behave sexually as those “betrothed” to God and honor Him with our bodies (1 Corinthians 6:12–20; Ephesians 5:18–33). (Source - GotQuestions.org)

Numbers 5:3 "You shall send away both male and female; you shall send them outside the camp so that they will not defile their camp where I dwell in their midst."

BGT Numbers 5:3 π ρσενικο ως θηλυκο ξαποστε λατε ξω τς παρεμβολς κα ο μ μιανο σιν τς παρεμβολς α τ ν ο ς γ καταγ νομαι ν α το ς

NET Numbers 5:3 You must expel both men and women; you must put them outside the camp, so that they will not defile their camps, among which I live."

NLT Numbers 5:3 This command applies to men and women alike. Remove them so they will not defile the camp in which I live among them."

ESV Numbers 5:3 You shall put out both male and female, putting them outside the camp, that they may not defile their camp, in the midst of which I dwell."

NIV Numbers 5:3 Send away male and female alike; send them outside the camp so they will not defile their camp, where I dwell among them."

KJV Numbers 5:3 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.

YLT Numbers 5:3 from male unto female ye do send out; unto the outside of the camp ye do send them; and they defile not their camps in the midst of which I do tabernacle.'

LXE Numbers 5:3 Whether male or female, send them forth out of the camp; and they shall not defile their camps in which I dwell among them.

- **outside the camp:** 1Ki 7:3 1Co 5:7-13 2Co 6:17 2Th 3:6 Tit 3:10 Heb 12:15,16 2Jn 1:10,11 Rev 21:27
- **will not defile:** Nu 19:22 Hag 2:13,14
- **in their midst:** Lev 26:11,12 De 23:14 Ps 68:18 Isa 12:6 2Co 6:16 Rev 21:3
- [Numbers 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Exodus 29:45 "I will dwell among the sons of Israel and will be their God.

Leviticus 26:12 I will also walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people.

REASON TO REMOVE IMPURITY GOD DWELLS IN THE CAMP

You shall send away both male and female; you shall send them outside the camp- If they are sent away then where are they to stay? The ESV note says they "must live in places such as caves or wilderness tents, separate from the people (cf. Lev. 13:46; 2 Kings 7:3)." Clean and unclean cuts across the lines of gender.

Irving Jensen - God had placed the tabernacle in the center of the camp, to emphasize that the life of the Israelites centered about

Him. Now He stated this fact very explicitly and clearly, and applied it to the life of the camp: The fact: I dwell "in the midst" of your camp (Nu 5:3). The application: "Put out of the camp every leper," and so forth (Nu 5:2). When the Holy One settles down to dwell, uncleanness and sin cannot find a home there. There is no room for joint occupancy. If God is in the midst, uncleanness must be put out. (Ibid)

Mattoon - The camp was to be kept clean not only for health and hygiene purposes, but also to teach the meaning of separation and holiness. God dwelt in the midst of His people.

So that (term of purpose) **they will not defile their camp where I dwell ([shakan](#)) in their midst** - The problem with defilement is the presence of Yahweh in the camp. The [Shekinah glory cloud](#) over the Tabernacle was the evidence that God dwelt in their midst. The purpose of sending all unclean people out of the camp was that His presence in the midst of the camp would not be defiled. Note **defile** is clearly a key word in Numbers 5 (8x in 7v - see below)

We also see why the removal of defiling influences from the camp was absolutely critical

For **the LORD your God walks in the midst of your camp** to deliver you and to defeat your enemies before you, therefore your camp must be holy; and He must not see anything indecent among you lest He turn away from you. (Dt 23:14).

THOUGHT - It follows from this passage that Israel would not be able to defeat their enemies if they had in their camp things that were **indecent** (Hebrew - ervah - nudity, and speaks of shameful exposure of sexual organs, male or female.) Given the seductive influence and infiltration of the internet into our society, including Christian circles and including male and female viewers, this principle calls for all of us to practice Psalm 101:3 "I will set no worthless thing before my eyes; I hate the work of those who fall away; It shall not fasten its grip on me." Note that last phrase "fasten...grip" means to be joined to another (as used in Ge 2:24), as we might say "stick like glue!" Don't play with indecent images on the internet, because they are not innocent and you may end up thoroughly entangled (cf Ps 25:15). Are you Entangled?

McGee adds "When we get to the Book of Joshua, we will see that Israel could not get a victory at Ai because Achan had sinned and had covered it up. It had to be brought to light and dealt with before Israel could have a victory. I believe that there could be revival today if more preachers, church officers, Sunday school teachers, choir directors, and singers would deal with the sins in their lives. Sins of the flesh are like a leprosy. God will not bless until that sin is dealt with."

Exodus 29:45+—And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God.

Leviticus 26:12+—And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people

2 Cor 6:14 **Do not be bound** together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? 15 Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? 16 Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "**I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.**" 17 "Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE," says the Lord. "AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN; And I will welcome you. 18 "And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me," Says the Lord Almighty. 2 Cor 7:1 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Brian Bell - Excluded from the camp why? because Jehovah was there! (3) Such was the righteous function of the Law. When in grace, Jesus came/returned to the camp and [1] cleansed the leper (Lk.5:13) [2] stopped the issue of blood (Lk.7:15) [3] & raised the dead (Lk.8:44) Not "kicked out of the family" but for a time they were camp followers only; excluded until their purification was ensured according to the provision of the laws already given. Q: Have you put out all that contaminates in your life? {stuff, certain friends, all that distracts

Thompson - God says if you want Me to lead you and bless you, you cannot be unclean, polluted and impure. You must get away from those things. Being unclean is just the opposite of being clean and holy. God cannot and will not bless that which is contrary to Him. He is Holy and Pure and He will bless those who are holy and pure. Being clean in God's sight had much more to do than just personal hygiene. For Israel to be clean they had to eat the right food; they had to wear the right clothes; they had to conduct themselves the right way privately and publicly. Unclean people were put out of the camp until they conformed to the ceremonial clean requirements. Now we in the church certainly may apply a principle and that is this—in order to be clean we must govern ourselves privately and publicly in ways God deems as right.

Will...Defile (make unclean) ([02930](#))([tame](#)) means to make unclean or become ceremonially unclean. To be

unclean, to desecrate, to defile, to make impure. The main idea of the action was that of contaminating or corrupting, especially in the sight of God. Animals and foods were considered clean or unclean by their nature. Persons and objects could become ritually unclean. Personal uncleanness could be incurred through birth, menstruation, bodily emissions, "leprosy," sexual relations and misdeeds and contact with death. Priests and levites were especially concerned with the issues of cleanness and uncleanness. The greatest uncleanness was idolatry which defiled the temple and the land. The prophets, in denouncing moral uncleanness, used ritual uncleanness as a metaphor for the wickedness which only God can cleanse.

Uses in Numbers - Nu 5:3; Nu 5:13; Nu 5:14; Nu 5:20; Nu 5:27; Nu 5:28; Nu 5:29; Num. 6:7; Num. 6:9; Num. 6:12; Num. 19:7; Num. 19:8; Num. 19:10; Num. 19:11; Num. 19:13; Num. 19:14; Num. 19:16; Num. 19:20; Num. 19:21; Num. 19:22; Num. 35:34

Gilbrant - The OT concept of "unclean" and "clean" is more theological than physical or hygienic. It is concerned with contamination or pollution of spiritual purity, rather than external cleanliness or physical health issues. The point is fitness or qualification for the presence of the Holy God. To be unclean is to be disqualified from fellowship with the Lord. The subject of unclean and clean occurs mainly in Leviticus, Numbers, and Ezekiel, which deal a lot with the Tabernacle or the Temple where God is present. People become unclean when they have contact with unclean things, have certain bodily conditions, or commit sexual sins, idolatry or murder. The latter three acts oppose the holiness of God in unfaithfulness to Him, and in taking the power of life and death into one's own hands, thus usurping God's authority. Uncleanness is a way of picturing the sin condition of separation from God, and these acts flow out of that condition showing one's lostness, and so make a person unclean. Besides these acts, the other things and conditions which were also considered unclean—touching or eating certain creatures (Lev. 11), childbirth (12), skin conditions (13, 14), certain negative surface conditions of clothing and houses (13, 14), and bodily discharges (15)—represented to them in their culture, the problem of sin and its consequences leading to death. They had serious significance for the Israelites in the days of Moses, which were such negative associations that God could not allow these things to be associated with his holy presence. They were considered impure, and because the Lord is holy, they had to be rejected or He would receive the wrong reputation. (Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary)

Numbers 5:4 The sons of Israel did so and sent them outside the camp; just as the LORD had spoken to Moses, thus the sons of Israel did.

BGT Numbers 5:4 καὶ ποίησαν ὡτως ὁ υἱ οἱ Ἰσραὴλ καὶ ἔαπ' ἵνα ἐξέλθωσι τὸν παρεμβολῆς καθ' ὃν ἔλεγε ὁ κύριος τῷ Μωϋσέ· ὡς ποίησαν ὁ υἱ οἱ Ἰσραὴλ

NET Numbers 5:4 So the Israelites did so, and expelled them outside the camp. As the LORD had spoken to Moses, so the Israelites did.

NLT Numbers 5:4 So the Israelites did as the LORD had commanded Moses and removed such people from the camp.

ESV Numbers 5:4 And the people of Israel did so, and put them outside the camp; as the LORD said to Moses, so the people of Israel did.

NIV Numbers 5:4 The Israelites did this; they sent them outside the camp. They did just as the LORD had instructed Moses.

KJV Numbers 5:4 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.

YLT Numbers 5:4 And the sons of Israel do so, and they send them out unto the outside of the camp; as Jehovah hath spoken unto Moses so have the sons of Israel done.

LXE Numbers 5:4 And the children of Israel did so, and sent them out of the camp: as the Lord said to Moses, so did the children of Israel.

- [Numbers 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

ISRAEL OBEYS THE

COMMAND OF THE LORD

The sons of Israel did so and sent them outside the camp; just as the LORD had spoken to Moses, thus the sons of Israel did - Notice the reiteration regarding Israel's obedience (did so...sent...did). At the outset Israel was an obedient people but that would soon change as they began their wilderness journey.

Jensen - This was another instance of the Israelites' obedience to Jehovah **before** they began to move on the journey. (Ibid)

Rayburn - It is interesting also that the performance of these regulations required the cooperation of the people. How would anyone know that some of these things had occurred (a repeated discharge or even the touching of a body) unless those involved had acknowledged the same?

Currid explains that "What all three categories have in common is that they all involve communicable uncleanness—that is, their uncleanness may be passed on to others who come into contact with them (see Lev. 11:32–38; Lev 13:45–46; Lev 15:4–12). These people are to be put outside the camp so that their uncleanness does not spread throughout the encampment. What is at stake is not merely the people in the camp, but the very sanctuary and dwelling place of God. Nothing unclean is to come near that which sits in the centre of the camp, but it will be thrust outside the camp. The final verse of the passage drives home the importance of the action: three times the text says that Israel did as God had commanded them. This triple emphasis is further heightened by the exact repetition at the beginning and end of the verse: it literally reads, 'Thus did the sons of Israel ... thus did the sons of Israel.' (EPSC-Nu)

It is a great deal better to live a holy life than to talk about it
Lighthouses do not ring bells and fire a cannon to call attention to their shining,
they just shine.
---D.L. Moody

Mattoon applies the principles in this first section - What does God use to help us be holy and cleanse our lives?

A. He uses the Word of God.

John 15:3—Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

John 17:17—Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

Ephesians 5:26—That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

B. He uses the Grace of God.

Titus 2:11-12—For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, [12] Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

C. He uses suffering and chastening.

Hebrews 12:10—For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.

Numbers 5:5 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

- [Numbers 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

Irving Jensen - Judge the Guilty (Nu 5:5–31) Having taught the Israelites in a symbolical manner that He and sin cannot dwell together, God now legislated what must be done when actual sin occurred in the camp, or when sin was suspected. The kinds of sin that might be committed were legion. God cited adultery as one example. First, the Lord stated the truths applicable to any kind of sin (Nu 5:5–10): (1) every sin becomes part of God's record: "When ... any sin"; (2) sin is basically "trespass against Jehovah"; (3) for sin there is guilt: "That soul shall be guilty"; (4) restored fellowship with God comes by confession and recompense (vv. 7–10). The timeless, universal truths about sin are clearly recognizable in these four statements. (Ibid)

Mattoon - In the first section of chapter five, the Lord gave instructions on keeping the camp clean. In the second phase of the chapter, He gave instructions on how to clean up their lives and put them in order. Two vital principles are dealt with here: 1. Confession 2. Restitution

Numbers 5:6 "Speak to the sons of Israel, 'When a man or woman commits any of the sins of mankind, acting unfaithfully against the LORD, and that person is guilty,

BGT Numbers 5:6 λ λησον το ς υ ο ς Ισραηλ λ γων ν ρ γυν σις ν ποι σ π τ ν μαρτι ν τ ν νθρωπ νων
κα παριδ ν παρ δ κα πλημμελ σ ψυχ κε νη

NET Numbers 5:6 "Tell the Israelites, 'When a man or a woman commits any sin that people commit, thereby breaking faith with the LORD, and that person is found guilty,

NLT Numbers 5:6 "Give the following instructions to the people of Israel: If any of the people-- men or women-- betray the LORD by doing wrong to another person, they are guilty.

ESV Numbers 5:6 "Speak to the people of Israel, When a man or woman commits any of the sins that people commit by breaking faith with the LORD, and that person realizes his guilt,

NIV Numbers 5:6 "Say to the Israelites: 'When a man or woman wrongs another in any way and so is unfaithful to the LORD, that person is guilty

KJV Numbers 5:6 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;

YLT Numbers 5:6 'Speak unto the sons of Israel, Man or woman, when they do any of the sins of man, by committing a trespass against Jehovah, and that person is guilty,

LXE Numbers 5:6 Speak to the children of Israel, saying, Every man or woman who shall commit any sin that is common to man, or if that soul shall in anywise have neglected the commandment and transgressed;

- **When:** Lev 5:1-4,17 Lev 6:2,3
- [Numbers 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Leviticus 6:1-5 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2"When a person sins and acts unfaithfully against the LORD, and deceives his companion in regard to a deposit or a security entrusted to him, or through robbery, or if he has extorted from his companion, 3or has found what was lost and lied about it and sworn falsely, so that he sins in regard to any one of the things a man may do; 4then it shall be, when he sins and becomes guilty, that he shall restore what he took by robbery or what he got by extortion, or the deposit which was entrusted to him or the lost thing which he found, 5or anything about which he swore falsely; he shall make restitution for it in full and add to it one-fifth more. He shall give it to the one to whom it belongs on the day he presents his guilt offering.

TRESPASS AGAINST THE LORD

Now Yahweh moves to a discussion of personal sins, which are not always as obvious as the defiling things in Nu 5:2.

Allen points out that "Another issue that leads to impurity in the camp is an unresolved personal injury. This type of evil may be harder to diagnose than even the mysterious skin disorders or fluid discharges of the earlier section. While the skin disorders and contact with dead bodies may lead to exclusion from the ritual of the worship of God in the community, social disorders will equally disrupt the cohesion of the people. These are examples of the concept in the MT sometimes described as "corporate solidarity." The health and effectiveness of the whole community depends on the health and effectiveness of the individuals within the community....Those with evident marks of uncleanness are to be expelled for the duration of their malady. But more insidious are those people who have overtly sinned against others in the community and who think that they may continue to function as though there were no real wrong." (EBC)

Speak to the sons of Israel, 'When a man or woman commits any of the sins of mankind, acting unfaithfully against the LORD - Note how God defines "sin" here is acting unfaithfully against Jehovah (speaking to Israel, His "wife" - Isaiah 54:5, Jer 31:32...the covenant of marriage is implied).

NET Note on when.... - "This type of law is known as casuistic. The law is introduced with "when/if" and then the procedure to be

adopted follows it. The type of law was common in the Law Code of Hammurabi."

NET Note on **sins** - The sin is essentially "missing the mark" which is the standard of the Law of the LORD. The sin is not in this case accidental or inadvertent. It means here simply failing to live up to the standard of the LORD.

Rayburn - All our sins against one another are first and foremost sins against God whose will it is that we should love our neighbor. It is this fact that explains David's statement to God in Psalm 51:4, after committing adultery and murder, "against you, you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight." He had certainly sinned against Bathsheba and Uriah, but in so sinning he had offended the Almighty. In typical Hebrew hyperbole, the greater sin is spoken of as if it were the only sin.

THOUGHT - Do we understand that when we sin it is (1) against Yahweh (cf Ge 39:9) and (2) reflects our unfaithful action against Him? If we really understood the gravity of our sin, might this consciousness serve as an impediment to sin?

Acting unfaithfully (04604) (**maal** from verb **maal** = act unfaithfully or treacherously, violate a legal obligation) is a noun which refers to an unfaithful (not adhering to vows, allegiance, or duty) act, a violation of allegiance (the fidelity owed by a subject to his or her Sovereign God) or of faith and confidence. Most uses of **maal** reflect violations are against Jehovah (exception = Job 21:34). The **NAS** translates **maal** as falsehood (1), treachery (2), trespass (1), trespass* (1), unfaithful (3), unfaithful act (4), unfaithful deeds (1), unfaithfully (6), unfaithfulness (6), very unfaithful (1).

and that person is guilty -

Numbers 5:7 then he shall confess his sins which he has committed, and he shall make restitution in full for his wrong and add to it one-fifth of it, and give it to him whom he has wronged.

BGT Numbers 5:7 ξαγορεσει τν μαρταν ν ποησεν κα ποδσει τν πλημμλειαν τ κεφλαιον κα τ πεμπτον ατο προσθσει π ατ κα ποδσει τνι πλημμλησεν ατ

NET Numbers 5:7 then he must confess his sin that he has committed and must make full reparation, add one fifth to it, and give it to whomever he wronged.

NLT Numbers 5:7 They must confess their sin and make full restitution for what they have done, adding an additional 20 percent and returning it to the person who was wronged.

ESV Numbers 5:7 he shall confess his sin that he has committed. And he shall make full restitution for his wrong, adding a fifth to it and giving it to him to whom he did the wrong.

NIV Numbers 5:7 and must confess the sin he has committed. He must make full restitution for his wrong, add one fifth to it and give it all to the person he has wronged.

KJV Numbers 5:7 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.

YLT Numbers 5:7 and they have confessed their sin which they have done, then he hath restored his guilt in its principal, and its fifth is adding to it, and hath given it to him in reference to whom he hath been guilty.

LXE Numbers 5:7 that person shall confess the sin which he has committed, and shall make satisfaction for his trespass: he shall pay the principal, and shall add to it the fifth part, and shall make restoration to him against whom he has trespassed.

- **confess**: Lev 5:5 26:40 Jos 7:19 Job 33:27,28 Ps 32:5 Pr 28:13 1Jn 1:8-10
- with the principal: Lev 5:15 6:4-7 7:7 Lu 19:8
- **[Numbers 5 Resources](#)** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passage:

Leviticus 5:5; 'So it shall be when he becomes guilty in one of these, that he shall confess that in which he has sinned.

CONFESSION AND CONSEQUENCES

then he shall confess his sins which he has committed, and he shall make restitution in full for his wrong and add to it one-fifth of it, and give it to him whom he has wronged - See Leviticus 6:1-7+ which describes sin and restitution. Confession plus 20% payment taught the people that sin is costly. It is like the gift that "keeps on giving." Sincere confession and restitution would imply genuine repentance of the sinning party.

Wiersbe points out another factor underscores the importance of confession and restitution - Israel was about to confront their enemies, and there could be no unity in the army if the people were in conflict with one another because of unresolved offenses. The soldiers would be alienated from each other and from the Lord, and that could lead to defeat. True unity begins with everybody being right with God and with each other.

Rayburn -The sin must be confessed, no doubt at the time the offender made his sacrifice and as he was laying his hands on the head of the animal; no secret restitution to protect one's reputation is allowed. And there must be actual restitution. The penitent must pay the amount and more that he stole from his brother. The wrong must be put right: it is not enough to say that one is sorry. There is a Baptist evangelist in England who at his evangelistic campaigns provides bins in which people in his congregations can return stolen goods so that the campaign staff, wherever possible, can return them to their rightful owners. And they collect a lot of stuff! [Brown, 44] The emphasis here, however, is on the thief doing it himself or herself and paying restitution personally. It is not enough simply to give the goods back. The owner has also had stolen their use for some time. He is entitled to more. You defrauded him; you must now, as it were, defraud yourself, suffer loss yourself, to make the matter right. Among the penalties are an added amount that has to be returned and the public acknowledgement that you were the thief.

Thompson - When Jesus Christ was here on earth, he completely disregarded the laws of uncleanness and leprosy and actually touched lepers (Luke 5:12-15) and He permitted lepers to touch Him (Luke 8:43-48). The reason for this is He is the One who can take away the terrible disease of our sin (I Pet. 2:24; Is. 53:4-6). Jesus Christ is the cure. Now leprosy is often a metaphorical picture of sin and the truth is we have all been infected by sin. We all need a sin cleansing. That sin cleansing is found in one Person, Jesus Christ. The point here is that God will not fellowship and bless people who have this disease and do nothing about it. God dwells with holy people. God dwells with clean people. So any unclean person needed to be removed from the fellowship if God were to bless the fellowship (I Cor. 5). This is exactly why Paul said in II Corinthians 7:1, "let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." When we sin, we need to go to God and confess it and get clean of it and get rid of it. God wants His people clean and pure. He will not pour out His blessings on those who are not clean. That is the point for Israel and for us.

Brian Bell - Stealing could easily be committed in this long March since everyone lives in open tents. Can't just confess but restitution is in order as well... + 20%. Teach your children that it is not only confession before God, but consequence toward man. {not greasy grace! David Jeremiah} Illustration: A pig ate his fill of acorns under an oak tree and then started to root around the tree. A crow remarked, "You should not do this. If you lay bare the roots, the tree will wither and die." "Let it die," said the pig. "Who cares as long as there are acorns?" [no pig...there are consequences!!!]

Story: The year is 1887. The man...a thief named Emmanuel Nenger. The scene is a small neighborhood grocery store. Mr. Nenger is buying some turnip greens. He gives the clerk a \$20 bill. As the clerk begins to put the money in the cash drawer to give Mr. Nenger his change, she notices some of the ink from the \$20 bill is coming off on her fingers which are damp from the turnip greens. She looks at Mr. Nenger, a man she has known for years. She looks at the smudged bill. This man is a trusted friend; she has known him all her life; he can't be a counterfeiter. She gives Mr. Nenger his change, and he leaves the store. But \$20 is a lot of money in 1887, and eventually the clerk calls the police. They verify the bill as counterfeit and get a search warrant to look through Mr. Nenger's home. In the attic they find where he is reproducing money. He is a master artist and is painting \$20 bills with brushes and paint! But also in the attic they find three portraits Nenger had painted. They seized these and eventually sold them at auction for \$16,000 (in 1887 currency, remember) or a little more than \$5,000 per painting. The irony is that it took Nenger almost as long to paint a \$20 bill as it did for him to paint a \$5,000 portrait! It's true that Emanuel Nenger was a thief, but the person from whom he stole the most was himself!!!

McGee on restitution - This is what Zacchaeus was offering to do. "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold" (Luke 19:8+). He was actually going farther than the Mosaic Law required him to go.

We see here that a restitution was to be made. Repentance, therefore, is more than simply saying, "I'm sorry." A relationship between God and the individual cannot be made sweet until the relationship is made right between the individuals. "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death" (2 Cor. 7:10). Many people today think that repentance means shedding a few tears and then going merrily on their way. It is much more than that. It is making things

right by making restitution to the individual who has been injured. We are to confess our sins to God, that is true. But we must remember that our Lord also said this: "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (Matt. 5:23–24). The world has the idea one can shed a few tears and eat humble pie for a while and then everything is right again. That is what is called the "sorrow of the world" in Corinthians, and that kind of repentance is meaningless. My Dad used to tell about a little boat on the Mississippi River. It had a little bitty boiler and a great big whistle. When that boat was going upstream and blew its whistle, it would drift back. It couldn't go upstream and blow its whistle at the same time! There are a lot of people like that today. Their repentance is like the blowing of the whistle. They shed tears in profusion, but there is no turning from sin, no turning to God, no restitution to the one they have injured. For this reason there is no progress in their Christian lives. (Ibid)

LASB - God included restitution, a unique concept for that day, as part of his law for Israel. When someone was robbed, the guilty person was required to restore the loss to the victim and pay an additional interest penalty. When we have wronged others, we ought to do more than apologize. We should look for ways to set matters right and, if possible, leave the victim even better off than when we harmed him or her. When we have been wronged, we should still seek restoration rather than striking out in revenge.

Mattoon - CONFESSION If the Christian is going to grow and stay close to the Lord, he must counter the effects of pride by confessing his sin to the Lord regularly. It's our pride, stubbornness, and rebellion that says.... I don't need to get right with God. I did nothing wrong. It's their fault. God doesn't care what I do. These attitudes hinder the growth of the believer. What does it mean to "confess?" Confession means "to say the same thing or to agree with God." It also indicates a ceasing of resistance and an attitude of surrender. The word "confess" in the Hebrew is from the word yadah which means "to throw a stone or an arrow away." This is where the idea of surrender comes. When we confess to the Lord, we look at our life the way God looks at it. We are not resistant towards Him. We have the attitude, "Lord, you are right." Examples of great men in Bible confessing - Aaron— Numbers 12:11 David— 2 Samuel 24:10— Ezra— Ezra 9:6— Nehemiah— Nehemiah 1:6-7. Daniel— Daniel 9:4-6— Peter— Luke 5:8

- Whom do we confess our sin to? The answer is not to a priest, but to Jesus Christ. (1 Ti 2:5, Heb 4:14-15)
- Be specific with God when you confess your wrongs to Him. Psalm 51:3-4 James 5:16
- Self Abasement and a Sense of Shame are Involved in Confession Jeremiah 3:25
- It Involves Sorrow for Offenses. Psalm 38:18 Confession does not blame, implying "I was wrong, but so were you." It does not communicate pride, "If I was wrong...."
- Stonewalling or Shielding are Absent from Confession. True confession has no "cover ups." It involves total honesty. Proverbs 28:13 True confession offers no excuses such as "I got angry. I had a bad day. I was tired." Confession involves the ceasing of sinful living. There was a cartoon several years ago in the Saturday Review of Literature in which little George Washington is standing with an axe in his hand. Before him, lying on the ground, is the famous cherry tree. He has already made his smug admission that he did it, after all, he "cannot tell a lie." But his father is standing there exasperated saying, "All right, so you admit it! You always admit it! The question is, when are you going to stop doing it?"
- Satisfaction or Restitution is Involved in Confession. When we confess or sin, we demonstrate our repentant attitude by making "wrongs" right with other people. This may involve restitution for damages. Numbers 5:6-7

Confession leads to restitution as we stated earlier. One of the clearest evidences of genuine repentance is the willingness to make right any damage that was suffered by the one whom you wronged. Restitution is an important principle in Scripture.

- Leviticus 6:4—Then it shall be, because he hath sinned, and is guilty, that he shall restore that which he took violently away, or the thing which he hath deceitfully gotten, or that which was delivered him to keep, or the lost thing which he found,
- Proverbs 6:31—But if he be found, he shall restore sevenfold; he shall give all the substance of his house.

Sin is costly.

- Luke 19:8—And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.

If you have damaged or stolen something, you are to replace it plus more. If you have damaged a person's reputation with your tongue, then you are to publicly clear that person's reputation. This would cut down on slander and gossip if people were required to do this. When we confess our sin, there is a change in attitude and an effort of restoration. (Numbers Commentary)

Numbers 5:8 'But if the man has no relative to whom restitution may be made for the wrong, the restitution which is made for the wrong must go to the LORD for the priest, besides the ram of atonement, by which atonement is made for him.

BGT Numbers 5:8 ν ὃ μ τ νθρ π γχιστε ων στε ποδο ναι α τ τ πλημμ λημα πρ ς α τ ν τ πλημμ λημα τ ποδι ὃ μενον κυρ τ ερε σται πλ ν το κριο το λασμο δι ο ξιλ σεται ν α τ περ α το

NET Numbers 5:8 But if the individual has no close relative to whom reparation can be made for the wrong, the reparation for the wrong must be paid to the LORD for the priest, in addition to the ram of atonement by which atonement is made for him.

NLT Numbers 5:8 But if the person who was wronged is dead, and there are no near relatives to whom restitution can be made, the payment belongs to the LORD and must be given to the priest. Those who are guilty must also bring a ram as a sacrifice, and they will be purified and made right with the LORD.

ESV Numbers 5:8 But if the man has no next of kin to whom restitution may be made for the wrong, the restitution for wrong shall go to the LORD for the priest, in addition to the ram of atonement with which atonement is made for him.

NIV Numbers 5:8 But if that person has no close relative to whom restitution can be made for the wrong, the restitution belongs to the LORD and must be given to the priest, along with the ram with which atonement is made for him.

KJV Numbers 5:8 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.

YLT Numbers 5:8 'And if the man have no redeemer to restore the guilt to, the guilt which is restored is Jehovah's, the priest's, apart from the ram of the atonements, whereby he maketh atonement for him.

- **have no:** Lev 25:25,26
- **the ram:** Lev 6:6-7 Lev 7:7
- **[Numbers 5 Resources](#)** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

NO FAMILY MEMBER TO RECOMPENSE

But if the man has no relative to whom restitution may be made for the wrong, the restitution which is made for the wrong must go to the LORD for the priest, besides the ram of atonement, by which atonement is made for him - **Restitution** is the verb [shub/sub](#) which speaks of movement back to the point of departure (cf Ge 3:19), a reversal of direction (sundial in 2 Ki 20:10), soul restored (Ps 23:3, Ps 19:7). In short, the effect of restitution seems to be more than "paying back" but in the soul of the paying sinner "getting back" to the place from which they departed. Most significantly restored fellowship with God comes by this personal confession and recompense. Compare...

Proverb 28:13+ He who conceals (Heb - kakah = cover) his transgressions will not prosper (Hebrew = tsalach = accomplish satisfactorily what is intended = generally expresses idea of a successful venture, as contrasted with failure. The source of such success is God), But he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion.

1 John 1:9+ - If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Currid - The restitution that goes to the priesthood, however, does not take the place of sacrifice. Both are to be made. Here and in Leviticus 6:4–7, the act of restitution is to occur prior to the offering of the sacrifice. Restitution is an acknowledgement of guilt and contrition. Once that has been done, the perpetrator goes to seek divine forgiveness by coming to the priest with a sacrifice.

Thompson - There are consequences to sin. Sometimes there needs to be restitution (Lev. 6:1-7; 7:1-10). The person who had done the wrong needed to confess it and make it right monetarily and add 20%. This certainly would teach His people that there is a costliness to sin. God was about to take His people to the Promised Land and to great blessings and He could not and would not do that if His people were at odds with each other. They needed to make things right. Now one thing that was added to this was that if the one wrong died. If the person died before the matter was made right, then the new law demanded that this be confessed to a priest and a 20 percent loss tax be given by the offender. There was a seriousness to sin against each other. Israel was getting ready to go into the Promised Land and confront many enemies and if they expected victory against enemies, they could not have unresolved issues that could affect the unity when in conflict.

ESV Study Bible - The NT affirms that reconciliation with one's fellow man is required of those who would be at peace with God (Matt. 5:23–26; 6:14–15).

Ram of atonement - see

Leviticus 6:6-7 "Then he shall bring to the priest his guilt offering to the LORD, **aram** without defect from the flock, according to your valuation, for a guilt offering, 7 and the priest shall make **atonement** for him before the LORD, and he will be forgiven for any one of the things which he may have done to incur guilt."

Make atonement (forgive, appease) (cf "mercy seat") ([03722](#))([kapar](#)) means to make atonement, to make reconciliation (to reconcile), to purge, to make propitiation (to propitiate), to pacify, to cancel. There are two main ideas regarding the meaning of **kapar** - (1) Kapar means to cover over sin (2) A number of resources however favor the idea that kapar means to wipe away. **Vine** writes that "Most uses of **kapar** involve the theological meaning of "**covering over**," often with the blood of a sacrifice, in order to atone for some sin. It is not clear whether this means that the "**covering over**" hides the sin from God's sight or implies that the sin is **wiped away** in this process." Mounce writes "In Israel's religious ceremonies other than the Day of Atonement, kâpar usually refers to God's wiping away our sins through various sacrifices (cf. Lev 1:4; 4:20, 26, 31). Note especially the parallel lines of Jer 18:23: "Do not forgive their crimes or blot out their sins from your sight." To forgive sins is to blot them out and wipe them clean. As Ps 65:3 attests, when we come to God overwhelmed by our sins, God wipes them clean (KJV, "will purge them away"; NIV "forgave"; cf. Ps 78:38 where "forgave" = kapar)."

Atonement - The divine act of grace whereby God draws to himself those who were once alienated from him through a blood sacrifice. In the OT, the shed blood of sacrificial offerings effected atonement (see Lev 17:11 and note); in the NT, the blood of Jesus, shed once for all time (Heb 9:12), does the same (see Ro 3:25; 1 Jn 2:2 and notes). atonement cover. See Lev 16:2 and note. That God's symbolic throne was capped with an atonement cover signified his great mercy toward his people—only such a God can be revered (Ps 130:3–4). (NIV SB) (cf Ex 25:17; Lev 17:11; Ro 3:25)

Numbers 5:9 'Also every contribution pertaining to all the holy gifts of the sons of Israel, which they offer to the priest, shall be his.

BGT Numbers 5:9 κα π σα παρχ κατ π ντα τ γιαζ μενα ν υ ο ς Ισραηλ σα ν προσφ ρωσι ν τ κυρ τ ερε α τ σ ται

NET Numbers 5:9 Every offering of all the Israelites' holy things that they bring to the priest will be his.

NLT Numbers 5:9 All the sacred offerings that the Israelites bring to a priest will belong to him.

ESV Numbers 5:9 And every contribution, all the holy donations of the people of Israel, which they bring to the priest, shall be his.

NIV Numbers 5:9 All the sacred contributions the Israelites bring to a priest will belong to him.

KJV Numbers 5:9 And every offering of all the holy things of the children of Israel, which they bring unto the priest, shall be his.

- **every contribution** , Nu 18:8,9,19 Ex 29:28 Lev 6:17,18,26 7:6-14 10:13 22:2,3 De 18:3,4 Eze 44:29,30 Mal 3:8-10 1Co 9:7-13
- [Numbers 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Also every contribution pertaining to all the holy gifts of the sons of Israel, which they offer to the priest, shall be his
Contribution (terumah) is a present offered up, a heave offering if you will (heave offerings were lifted up toward heaven the the priests - did they do that with this **contribution**? Not sure.)

NET Note - The Hebrew word תְּרוּמָה (térumah) seems to be a general word for any offering that goes to the priests

Rayburn - A new wrinkle in addition to what we have in Leviticus (Leviticus 6:1-5+) is that if the offended person, the defrauded man is dead when the offender comes to repentance and wants to make restitution, and if the man has no living relatives, the restitution must still be made, but in this case to the priest.

Numbers 5:10 'So every man's holy gifts shall be his; whatever any man gives to the priest, it becomes his.'"

NET Numbers 5:10 Every man's holy things will be his; whatever any man gives the priest will be his."

NLT Numbers 5:10 Each priest may keep all the sacred donations that he receives."

ESV Numbers 5:10 Each one shall keep his holy donations: whatever anyone gives to the priest shall be his."

NIV Numbers 5:10 Each man's sacred gifts are his own, but what he gives to the priest will belong to the priest.' "

KJV Numbers 5:10 And every man's hallowed things shall be his: whatsoever any man giveth the priest, it shall be his.

YLT Numbers 5:10 and any man's hallowed things become his; that which any man giveth to the priest becometh his.'

LXE Numbers 5:10 And the hallowed things of every man shall be his; and whatever man shall give any thing to the priest, the gift shall be his.

- **holy gifts** 1Co 3:21-23 1Pe 2:5,7,9
- [Numbers 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

RESTITUTION GIFTS TO THE PRIESTS

So every man's holy ([qodesh](#); Lxx - [hagiazō](#)) *gifts shall be his; whatever any man gives to the priest, it becomes his* - Note double mention of "his" - emphasizing this holy gift belongs wholly to the priest.

NET Note on gifts - The "holy gifts" are described with the root of [שָׁדָר](#) ([qodesh](#)) to convey that they were separate. Such things had been taken out of the ordinary and normal activities of life.

Numbers 5:11 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

- [Numbers 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying

NIV SB summary - Issues of purity begin with physical marks (vv. 1–4), are expanded to interpersonal relationships (vv. 5–10), and then intrude into the most intimate of relationships (vv. 11–31)—the purity of a man and woman in their marriage bed

Numbers 5:12 "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'If any man's wife goes astray and is unfaithful to him,

BGT Numbers 5:12 λ λησον το ς υ ο ς Ισραηλ κα ρε ς πρ ς α το ς νδρ ς νδρ ς ν παραβ γυν α το κα παρ δ α τ ν περιδο σα

NET Numbers 5:12 "Speak to the Israelites and tell them, 'If any man's wife goes astray and behaves unfaithfully toward him,

NLT Numbers 5:12 "Give the following instructions to the people of Israel."Suppose a man's wife goes astray, and she is unfaithful to her husband

ESV Numbers 5:12 "Speak to the people of Israel, If any man's wife goes astray and breaks faith with him,

NIV Numbers 5:12 "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'If a man's wife goes astray and is unfaithful to him

KJV Numbers 5:12 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man's wife go aside, and commit a trespass against him,

YLT Numbers 5:12 'Speak unto the sons of Israel, and thou hast said unto them, When any man's wife turneth aside, and hath committed against him a trespass,

LXE Numbers 5:12 Speak to the children of Israel, and thou shalt say to them, Whosoever wife shall transgress against him, and slight and despise him,

- Nu 5:19,20 Pr 2:16,17
- [Numbers 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passage:

Ex 20:14+ "You shall not commit adultery.

Hebrews 13:4+ Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

Comment - Adultery is a sin "against God" (Ge 39:9) as well as against the marriage partner.

GOD'S WORD ON AN UNFAITHFUL WIFE

Now think about why God would move from external uncleanness to sexual uncleanness. The former was easier to identify. The latter was much more difficult to prove and the effects of sin in such a setting could be devastating to a family and others in the camp. Jehovah gives the Israelites a way to put any such accusations to the test, and He would be the ultimate Judge of right or wrong.

Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'If any man's wife goes astray and is unfaithful to him - Unfaithful is ma'al which means to act unfaithfully, break faith, commit a violation - act in a manner which is untrustworthy or unreliable in relation to an agreement or relationship.

KJVS - Adulterous wives are picked out for special attention because this act pollutes those involved, making them unclean (Nu 5:13, 19, 28; Lev. 18:20, 25, 27).

Numbers 5:13 and a man has intercourse with her and it is hidden from the eyes of her husband and she is undetected, although she has defiled herself, and there is no witness against her and she has not been caught in the act,

BGT Numbers 5:13 κα κοιμηθ τις μετ α τ ς κο την σπ ρματος κα λ θ ξ φθαλμ ν το νδρ ς α τ ς κα κρ ψ α τ δ μεμιαμ νη κα μ ρτυς μ ν μετ α τ ς κα α τ μ συνειλημ νη

NET Numbers 5:13 and a man has sexual relations with her without her husband knowing it, and it is hidden that she has defiled herself, since there was no witness against her, nor was she caught—

NLT Numbers 5:13 and has sex with another man, but neither her husband nor anyone else knows about it. She has defiled herself, even though there was no witness and she was not caught in the act.

ESV Numbers 5:13 if a man lies with her sexually, and it is hidden from the eyes of her husband, and she is undetected though she has defiled herself, and there is no witness against her, since she was not taken in the act,

NIV Numbers 5:13 by sleeping with another man, and this is hidden from her husband and her impurity is undetected (since there is no witness against her and she has not been caught in the act),

KJV Numbers 5:13 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;

YLT Numbers 5:13 and a man hath lain with her with the seed of copulation, and it hath been hid from the eyes of her husband, and concealed, and she hath been defiled, and there is no witness against her, and she hath not been caught,

LXE Numbers 5:13 and supposing any one shall lie with her carnally, and the thing shall be hid from the eyes of her husband, and she should conceal it and be herself defiled, and there be no witness with her, and she should not be taken;

- Lev 18:20 20:10 Pr 7:18,19 30:20
- [Numbers 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

UNFAITHFULNESS UNAPPARENT

and a man has intercourse with her - Shakab = lies down, here sexual connotation. Thus the Hebrew reads "and a man lies with her with the emission of semen." The point is there was clearly adultery.

and it is hidden from the eyes of her husband and she is undetected, although she has defiled herself, and there is no witness against her and she has not been caught in the act - "The indication in the text is that if she had never behaved suspiciously the sin might not have been detected." (NET Note)

Defiled (make unclean) (02930) see note on [tame](#)

LASB - This test for adultery served to remove a jealous husband's suspicion. Trust between husband and wife had to be completely eroded for a man to bring his wife to the priest for this type of test. Today priests and pastors help restore marriages by counseling couples who have lost faith in each other. Men and women should strengthen the bond of trust in marriage. Flirtatious and intimate communication with someone you're not married to can build suspicion and weaken trust. Guard your heart and guard your marriage in order to maintain trust and strengthen your bond with your spouse.

Numbers 5:14 if a spirit of jealousy comes over him and he is jealous of his wife when she has defiled herself, or if a spirit of jealousy comes over him and he is jealous of his wife when she has not defiled herself,

BGT Numbers 5:14 κα π λθ α τ πνε μα ζηλ σεως κα ζηλ σ τ ν γυνα κα α το α τ δ μεμ ανται π λθ α τ πνε μα ζηλ σεως κα ζηλ σ τ ν γυνα κα α το α τ δ μ μεμιαμμ νη

NET Numbers 5:14 and if jealous feelings come over him and he becomes suspicious of his wife, when she is defiled; or if jealous feelings come over him and he becomes suspicious of his wife, when she is not defiled—

NLT Numbers 5:14 If her husband becomes jealous and is suspicious of his wife and needs to know whether or not she has defiled herself,

ESV Numbers 5:14 and if the spirit of jealousy comes over him and he is jealous of his wife who has defiled herself, or if the spirit of jealousy comes over him and he is jealous of his wife, though she has not defiled herself,

NIV Numbers 5:14 and if feelings of jealousy come over her husband and he suspects his wife and she is impure--or if he is jealous and suspects her even though she is not impure--

KJV Numbers 5:14 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:

YLT Numbers 5:14 and a spirit of jealousy hath passed over him, and he hath been jealous of his wife, and she hath been defiled; -- or, a spirit of jealousy hath passed over him, and he hath been jealous of his wife, and she hath not been defiled --

LXE Numbers 5:14 and there should come upon him a spirit of jealousy, and he should be jealous of his wife, and she be defiled; or there should come upon him a spirit of jealousy, and he should be jealous of his wife, and she should not be defiled;

- Nu 5:30 Pr 6:34 Song 8:6 Zep 3:8 1Co 10:22
- [Numbers 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

A SPIRIT OF JEALOUSY

if a spirit of jealousy comes over him and he is jealous of his wife (and he becomes suspicious of his wife) **when she has defiled herself, or if a spirit of jealousy comes over him and he is jealous of his wife when she has not defiled herself** - Heb.

רוח־קנאה ועבר עליו ve-âbar àlauv ruach kinâh, and the spirit of jealousy pass upon him. Gr. “And the spirit of jealousy (rather, jealousy—ζηλῶσις) come upon him.” This is not a “spirit” in the sense of a demonic spirit but is more of a mood of suspicion whether well founded or not.

NET NOTE - The Hebrew text has the construct case, “spirit of jealousy.” The word “spirit” here has the sense of attitude, mood, feelings. The word קִנְאָה (qin’ah) is the genitive of attribute, modifying what kind of feelings they are. The word means either “zeal” or “jealousy,” depending on the context. It is a passionate feeling to guard or protect an institution or relationship. It can also express strong emotional possessiveness such as envy and coveting. Here there is a feeling of jealousy, but no proof of infidelity.

George Bush - By the “spirit of jealousy” is implied a jealous or zealous affection of mind, one by which the subject of it is powerfully impelled. In like manner the Scriptures elsewhere speak of “the spirit of wisdom, the spirit of counsel, the spirit of knowledge,” Is. 11:2, Eph. 1:17; “the spirit of fornications,” Hos. 4:12; “the spirit of fear,” 2 Tim. 1:7; “the spirit of meekness,” Gal. 6:1; “the spirit of slumber,” Rom. 11:8; and in 1 Cor. 14:12, “spirits” are put for the gifts and movings of the Holy Spirit.

Jealousy (07068) ([qin'ah](#)) means ardor, zeal, jealousy. (from colour produced in face by deep emotion); ardour of jealousy of husband Proverbs 6:34; Proverbs 27:4; The picture is that of intense fervor, passion, and emotion. Key word in Numbers 5 - Num. 5:14; Num. 5:15; Num. 5:18; Num. 5:25; Num. 5:29; Num. 5:30; Num. 25:11;

Jealous (07065) see note on [qanah](#)

Defile (make unclean) (02930) see note on [tame](#)

Irving Jensen - summarizes the principles in Nu 5:11-31-

The remainder of the chapter deals with the case of a man suspecting his wife of adultery, whether she actually committed the sin or not (Nu 5:11–31). She was not taken in such an act, hence no one could witness against her. What was the solution? If she was innocent, how could the husband's suspicion be dispelled? If she was guilty, who could justly declare her so? The procedure which Jehovah directed here made prominent this basic truth concerning all sin: God knows, and God judges. The man was to bring his wife to the priest (5:15), who would then “set the woman before Jehovah” (Nu 5:18). She was to drink the priest's “water of bitterness” (Nu 5:18). If she was innocent of the husband's charge, the water would not harm her (Nu 5:19). If she had been defiled with another man, then the water would cause her body to swell and her thigh to fall away, and she would be a curse among her people (Nu 5:27). Many sins would be committed by the Israelites on their journey to Canaan, and many innocent persons would be suspected of sins not committed. There would have to be a firm and clear understanding on the part of the leaders and the people how to insure the workings of God's justice. **From the directions by Jehovah for this one example of adultery, the Israelites were clearly taught:**

1. sins committed in the body are basically sins of the heart;
2. only God knows the heart;
3. only God can and will give fair judgment.

How wonderful a society whose supreme court is God Himself!

Numbers 5:15 the man shall then bring his wife to the priest, and shall bring as an offering for her one-tenth of an ephah of barley meal; he shall not pour oil on it nor put frankincense on it, for it is a grain offering of jealousy, a grain offering of memorial, a reminder of iniquity.

BGT Numbers 5:15 καὶ ξείνθρωπος τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ πρὸς τὴν ἐρα καὶ προσοσεί τ' ὄρον περ' αὐτῆς τὸ κατὸν τοῖφι λευρὸν κριθινὸν ὀκπιχέει πατλαίον ὃ δὲ πιθῇ πατλαβάνον σπινγρῦθυσ ἀζηλοτυπᾶς θυσαμνημοσνοὺ ναμὶμν σκουσα μάρτυν

NET Numbers 5:15 then the man must bring his wife to the priest, and he must bring the offering required for her, one tenth of an ephah of barley meal; he must not pour olive oil on it or put frankincense on it, because it is a grain offering of suspicion, a grain offering for remembering, for bringing iniquity to remembrance.

NLT Numbers 5:15 the husband must bring his wife to the priest. He must also bring an offering of two quarts of barley flour to be presented on her behalf. Do not mix it with olive oil or frankincense, for it is a jealousy

offering-- an offering to prove whether or not she is guilty.

ESV Numbers 5:15 then the man shall bring his wife to the priest and bring the offering required of her, a tenth of an ephah of barley flour. He shall pour no oil on it and put no frankincense on it, for it is a grain offering of jealousy, a grain offering of remembrance, bringing iniquity to remembrance.

NIV Numbers 5:15 then he is to take his wife to the priest. He must also take an offering of a tenth of an ephah of barley flour on her behalf. He must not pour oil on it or put incense on it, because it is a grain offering for jealousy, a reminder offering to draw attention to guilt.

KJV Numbers 5:15 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.

YLT Numbers 5:15 'Then hath the man brought in his wife unto the priest, and he hath brought in her offering for her, a tenth of the ephah of barley meal, he doth not pour on it oil, nor doth he put on it frankincense, for it is a present of jealousy, a present of memorial, causing remembrance of iniquity.

LXE Numbers 5:15 then shall the man bring his wife to the priest, and shall bring his gift for her, the tenth part of an ephah of barley-meal: he shall not pour oil upon it, neither shall he put frankincense upon it; for it is a sacrifice of jealousy, a sacrifice of memorial, recalling sin to remembrance.

- **offering for her:** Lev 5:11 Ho 3:2
- **bringing:** 1Ki 17:18 Eze 29:16 Heb 10:3
- [Numbers 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

PREPARATIONS FOR THE TESTING OF THE WIFE

the man shall then bring his wife to the priest, and shall bring as an offering ([gorban/korban](#)) for her one-tenth of an ephah of barley meal he shall not pour oil on it nor put frankincense on it- The husband brings the wife and the offering to the priest. Absence of oil and frankincense would seem to emphasize this is not a joyful offering. And so this offering, without oil or frankincense, implied the baseness of the crime of which the woman was suspected, and the mournful state of her family. It was not an atoning sacrifice, but an oblation for a memorial, as solemnly referring the decision to God, and calling upon him either to acquit or punish.

for it is a grain offering([minchah](#)) of jealousy, a grain offering ([minchah](#)) of memorial ([zikkaron](#)), a reminder ([zakar](#)) of iniquity (['avon](#)) - NET = "because it is a grain offering of suspicion, a grain offering for remembering, for bringing iniquity to remembrance."

NET Note on memorial - The word "remembering" is זָכַרְוֹן (The final verbal form, מִזְכֶּרֶת (mazkeret), explains what the memorial was all about—it was causing iniquity to be remembered.); the meaning of the word here is not so much "memorial," which would not communicate much, but the idea of bearing witness before God concerning the charges. The truth would come to light through this ritual, and so the attestation would stand. This memorial would bring the truth to light. It was a somber occasion, and so no sweet smelling additives were placed on the altar.

Currid on a reminder of iniquity - The term 'remembrance' most often means to remind someone of a past deed (see Lev. 23:24), but here the idea appears to be 'to bring to knowledge'. In other words, it is to stand as a testimonial against the woman who is guilty of such a crime as adultery.

NET Note agrees - The final verbal form, מִזְכֶּרֶת (mazkeret), explains what the **memorial** was all about—it was causing iniquity to be remembered.

Constable on a reminder of iniquity - The meal offering was, of course, representative of the works that an individual presented to God. In this case it was also an offering that the man gave in "jealousy" as a "memorial" or remembrance. He presented it to bring his wife's crime to the Lord's remembrance that He might judge it.

NIVSB has an interesting note - The actions presented here seem severe and harsh. But the consequences would have been worse for a woman charged with adultery by an angry husband if there was no provision for her guilt or innocence to be demonstrated. That she was taken to the priest (v. 15) is finally an act of mercy.

MacArthur - The purpose of the husband's offering was to bring the secret iniquity (if it was present) to light. How this was done is explained in Nu 5:18, 25–26.

Numbers 5:18 'The priest shall then have the woman stand before the LORD and let the hair of the woman's

head go loose, and place the grain offering of memorial in her hands, which is the grain offering of jealousy, and in the hand of the priest is to be the water of bitterness that brings a curse.

Nu 5:25-26 'The priest shall take the grain offering of jealousy from the woman's hand, and he shall wave the grain offering before the LORD and bring it to the altar; 26 and the priest shall take a handful of the grain offering as its memorial offering and offer it up in smoke on the altar, and afterward he shall make the woman drink the water.

Gilbrant - Trial by ordeal was even used in the Middle Ages, where sometimes the trial was by walking through fire. Doubtless many innocent people died in such processes. This section of Numbers is not trial by ordeal. No physical endangerment was resorted to.

John Currid notes that "A test for adultery was a common practice in the ancient Near East. The Code of Hammurabi, for example, contains the following two laws:

131. If a seignior's wife was accused by her husband, but she was not caught while lying with another man, she shall make affirmation by god and return to her house.

132. If the finger was pointed at the wife of a seignior because of another man, but she has not been caught while lying with the other man, she shall throw herself into the river for the sake of her husband.

Numbers 5:16 'Then the priest shall bring her near and have her stand before the LORD,

NET Numbers 5:16 ""Then the priest will bring her near and have her stand before the LORD.

NLT Numbers 5:16 "The priest will then present her to stand trial before the LORD.

ESV Numbers 5:16 "And the priest shall bring her near and set her before the LORD.

NIV Numbers 5:16 " 'The priest shall bring her and have her stand before the LORD.

KJV Numbers 5:16 And the priest shall bring her near, and set her before the LORD:

YLT Numbers 5:16 'And the priest hath brought her near, and hath caused her to stand before Jehovah,

LXE Numbers 5:16 And the priest shall bring her, and cause her to stand before the Lord.

ASV Numbers 5:16 And the priest shall bring her near, and set her before Jehovah:

CSB Numbers 5:16 "The priest is to bring her forward and have her stand before the LORD.

- Lev 1:3 Jer 17:10 Heb 13:4 Rev 2:22,23
- [Numbers 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

PRIEST PRESENTS WOMAN IN PRESENCE OF YAHWEH

Then the priest shall bring her near and have her stand before the LORD - NLT = "The priest will then present her to stand trial before the LORD." **Before** ([panim/paniym](#) = face) **the LORD** (face to face with Yahweh). In this position her guilt or innocence was clearly exposed to the all seeing eye of God for Pr 15:3 says "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, Watching the evil and the good." So He had already seen her "evil" or her "good."

NET Note on stand - The verb is the Hiphil of the word "to stand." It could be rendered "station her," but that sounds too unnatural. This is a meeting between an accused person and the Judge of the whole earth.

Brian Bell - This test was to reveal in her **body** the corruption that was in her **heart**. It was to bring evil to the surface. The drinking of the water was perfectly harmless in itself. It was a challenge to God on the part of the woman to demonstrate her purity as against an unjust charge! Like, "May God strike me dead if...". Except there was actually the fear of it happening for them. So it wasn't any action of the water, but by the direct intervention of Jehovah!

Numbers 5:17 and the priest shall take holy water in an earthenware vessel; and he shall take some of the dust that is on the floor of the tabernacle and put it into the water.

BGT Numbers 5:17 κα λ μψεται ερε ς δωρ καθαρ ν ζ ν ν γγε στρακ ν κα τ ς γ ς τ ς ο σης π το
δ φους τ ς σκην ς το μαρτυρ ου κα λαβ ν ερε ς μβαλε ε ς τ δωρ

NET Numbers 5:17 The priest will then take holy water in a pottery jar, and take some³³ of the dust that is on the floor of the tabernacle, and put it into the water.

NLT Numbers 5:17 He must take some holy water in a clay jar and pour into it dust he has taken from the Tabernacle floor.

ESV Numbers 5:17 And the priest shall take holy water in an earthenware vessel and take some of the dust that is on the floor of the tabernacle and put it into the water.

NIV Numbers 5:17 Then he shall take some holy water in a clay jar and put some dust from the tabernacle floor into the water.

KJV Numbers 5:17 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:

YLT Numbers 5:17 and the priest hath taken holy water in an earthen vessel, and of the dust which is on the floor of the tabernacle doth the priest take, and hath put it into the water,

LXE Numbers 5:17 And the priest shall take pure running water in an earthen vessel, and he shall take of the dust that is on the floor of the tabernacle of witness, and the priest having taken it shall cast it into the water.

- **holy water:** Nu 19:2-9 Ex 30:18
- **of the dust:** Job 2:12 Jer 17:13 La 3:29 Joh 8:6,8
- [Numbers 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

PRIEST PREPARES "HOLY POTION"

And the priest shall take holy water in an earthenware vessel- The source of the **holy water** (Lxx = "pure running water") is uncertain but Mishnah says it is water from the laver that is used for priestly purification (Exod. 30:17–21).

NET Note on holy water - This is probably water taken from the large bronze basin in the courtyard. It is water set apart for sacred service. "Clean water" (so NEB) does not capture the sense very well, but it does have the support of the Greek that has "pure running water." That pure water would no doubt be from the bronze basin anyway.

And he shall take some of the dust that is on the floor of the tabernacle -In a sense he mixes holy dust with holy water. And in Nu 5:23 we see this was mixed with some of the ink used to write the curses. Of course "holy dust" would still have various pollutants in it, so it would not have been "healthy" to drink.

Bush - The design of putting **dust** into the water was to signify the reproach and shame she lay under. Ainsworth remarks, that as dust was the serpent's food, so it was implied that if she had hearkened to the serpent's temptation, she might expect to partake of the serpent's curse. Yet it was to be dust taken from "the floor of the tabernacle," whence it acquired a certain degree of sanctity, and thus an honor was put upon every thing pertaining to the place which God had chosen to put his name there, and an awe inspired of the divine judgments. "Nothing could be more unexceptionable than taking dust from the floor, and this in presence of the woman and her friends. This was very unlike the case of the ordeals among the heathen, when the persons accused were required to drink things naturally pernicious; to handle hot iron; or to dip their hands into boiling water, hot oil, etc., when nothing but a miracle, or some artifice, would save the innocent; whereas here, nothing but a miracle could hurt the guilty. It was therefore an excellent method to set the mind of the husband at ease, in a case which is frequently the occasion of much distress."—Priestly.

And put it into the water - "Heb. el hammáyim, to the water; as the Rabbinites say, "He put it upon the top of the water, that it might be seen upon the upper part of the water." And again, "If he put in the dust before the water, it was unlawful." (Bush)

Numbers 5:18 'The priest shall then have the woman stand before the LORD and let the hair of the woman's head go loose, and place the grain offering of memorial in her hands, which is the grain offering of jealousy, and in the hand of the priest is to be the water of bitterness that brings a curse.

BGT Numbers 5:18 κα στ σει ερε ς τ ν γυνα κα ναντι κυρ ου κα ποκαλ ψει τ ν κεφαλ ν τ ς γυναικ ς κα

ὁ σὺ π τ ς χε ρας α τ ς τ ν θ υ σ α ν τ ο μ ν η μ ο σ ν ο υ τ ν θ υ σ α ν τ ς ζ η λ ο τ υ π α ς ν ὁ τ χ ε ι ρ τ ο ε ρ ὤ ς σ τ α ι τ ὤ ρ τ ο λ ε γ μ ο τ ο π ι κ α τ α ρ ὤ μ ν ο υ τ ο τ ο υ

NET Numbers 5:18 Then the priest will have the woman stand before the LORD, uncover the woman's head, and put the grain offering for remembering in her hands, which is the grain offering of suspicion. The priest will hold in his hand the bitter water that brings a curse.

NLT Numbers 5:18 When the priest has presented the woman before the LORD, he must unbind her hair and place in her hands the offering of proof -- the jealousy offering to determine whether her husband's suspicions are justified. The priest will stand before her, holding the jar of bitter water that brings a curse to those who are guilty.

ESV Numbers 5:18 And the priest shall set the woman before the LORD and unbind the hair of the woman's head and place in her hands the grain offering of remembrance, which is the grain offering of jealousy. And in his hand the priest shall have the water of bitterness that brings the curse.

NIV Numbers 5:18 After the priest has had the woman stand before the LORD, he shall loosen her hair and place in her hands the reminder offering, the grain offering for jealousy, while he himself holds the bitter water that brings a curse.

KJV Numbers 5:18 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:

YLT Numbers 5:18 and the priest hath caused the woman to stand before Jehovah, and hath uncovered the woman's head, and hath given into her hands the present of the memorial, it is a present of jealousy, and in the hand of the priest are the bitter waters which cause the curse.

LXE Numbers 5:18 And the priest shall cause the woman to stand before the Lord, and shall uncover the head of the woman, and shall put into her hands the sacrifice of memorial, the sacrifice of jealousy; and in the hand of the priest shall be the water of this conviction that brings the curse.

- the priest: Heb 13:4 Rev 2:19-23
- uncover: Lev 13:45 1Co 11:15 Heb 4:12,13
- and put: Nu 5:15,25,26
- the bitter water: So called from the bitter effects which it had upon the guilty. Nu 5:17,22,24 De 29:18 1Sa 15:32 Pr 5:4 Ec 7:26 Isa 38:17 Jer 2:19 Rev 10:9,10
- [Numbers 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

The priest shall then have the woman stand before the LORD- "Heb. "Shall cause to stand." She was to be placed before the door of the tabernacle with her face towards the ark, where was the symbol of the divine presence. This was a place of constant resort, and the publicity of the exposure would not only tend to affect duly her own feelings, but operate also as a warning to others not "to do after her lewdness." (Bush)

and let the hair of the woman's head go loose- Letting her down was a sign of mourning or disgrace (Lev 10:6, Lev 13:45; Lev 21:10). Some versions like the NET have " uncover the woman's head," about which Bush writes "A covering upon the head of a woman was regarded as a sign of subjection to her husband and of corresponding protection upon his part towards her."

Constable on letting the hair go loose - The release of the woman's hair, normally bound up, represented the temporary loss of her glory (i.e., her good reputation). Other possibilities are that it symbolized her openness, mourning, or uncleanness.

And place the grain offering of memorial in her hands, which is the grain offering of jealousy- "This offering having been brought by her husband for her, v. 15, she was now to take and offer, emblematical of her offering herself to the Lord's trial, as the oblation was to be presented to him." (Bush)

and in the hand of the priest is to be the water of bitterness that brings a curse- **Maimonides** writes "All the while that her head is bare, and the meal-offering in her hands, the water is to be in a vessel in the priest's hand, that she may see the water."

Bush on the water of bitterness that brings a curse- The bitter water that causeth the curse. Heb. mē hammârim, waters of bitternesses. Gr. to hudor tou elegmou, water of conviction, so called from its convincing of guilt.

NET Note - It seems to have been a temporary provision, for this is the only place that it appears, and no provision is made for its use later. It may have served as a didactic force, warning more than actually legislating. No provision is made in it for a similar

charge to be brought against the man, but in the case of the suspicion of the woman the man would be very hesitant to demand this test given the harshness on false witnessing in Israel. The passage remains a rather strange section of the Law.

Numbers 5:19 'The priest shall have her take an oath and shall say to the woman, "If no man has lain with you and if you have not gone astray into uncleanness, being under the authority of your husband, be immune to this water of bitterness that brings a curse;

BGT Numbers 5:19 κα ρκιε ατν ερε ς κα ρε τ γυναικ ε μ κεκομητα τις μετ σο ε μ παραβ βηκας μιανθ ναι π τ ν νδρατν σεαυτ ς θα σθι π το δατος το λεγμο το πικαταρωμ νου το του

NET Numbers 5:19 Then the priest will put the woman under oath and say to the her, "If no other man has had sexual relations with you, and if you have not gone astray and become defiled while under your husband's authority, may you be free from this bitter water that brings a curse.

NLT Numbers 5:19 The priest will then put the woman under oath and say to her, 'If no other man has had sex with you, and you have not gone astray and defiled yourself while under your husband's authority, may you be immune from the effects of this bitter water that brings on the curse.

ESV Numbers 5:19 Then the priest shall make her take an oath, saying, 'If no man has lain with you, and if you have not turned aside to uncleanness while you were under your husband's authority, be free from this water of bitterness that brings the curse.

NIV Numbers 5:19 Then the priest shall put the woman under oath and say to her, "If no other man has slept with you and you have not gone astray and become impure while married to your husband, may this bitter water that brings a curse not harm you.

KJV Numbers 5:19 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: {with another....: or, being in the power of thy husband: Heb. under thy husband}

YLT Numbers 5:19 'And the priest hath caused her to swear, and hath said unto the woman, If no man hath lain with thee, and if thou hast not turned aside to uncleanness under thy husband, be free from these bitter waters which cause the curse;

LXE Numbers 5:19 And the priest shall adjure her, and shall say to the woman, If no one has lain with thee, and if thou hast not transgressed so as to be polluted, being under the power of thy husband, be free from this water of the conviction that causes the curse.

- charge her: Mt 26:63
- with another: or, being in the power of they husband, Heb. under thy husband. Ro 7:2
- [Numbers 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE WOMAN IS PLACED UNDER OATH

Note that vv19-24 will describe the makeup of the oath of the curse. The actual ritual before the LORD will pick back up in Nu 5:25.

Bush - The priest was thus, in the most solemn manner, to adjure the woman to tell the truth, and to denounce the curse of God against her if she were guilty, at the same time declaring to her what would be the effect of her drinking the water.

The priest shall have her take an oath and shall say to the woman, "If no man (other than her husband) has lain with you (Heb. tahath ishêkâ, under thy husband) and if you have not gone astray into uncleanness, being under the authority of your husband,

be immune to this water of bitterness that brings a curse - Heb. "Be thou innocent," that is, free, guiltless, clear; this water shall be innocuous to thee; thou shalt receive no harm from it.

NET Note - Although there would be stress involved, a woman who was innocent would have nothing to hide, and would be confident. The wording of the priest's oath is actually designed to enable the potion to keep her from harm and not produce the physical effects it was designed to do.

Numbers 5:20 if you, however, have gone astray, being under the authority of your husband, and if you have defiled yourself and a man other than your husband has had intercourse with you"

BGT Numbers 5:20 ε ὅ σ παραβ ῆγκας π νῶρ ς ο σα μεμ ανσαι κα ὅωκ ν τις τ ν κο την α το ν σο πλ ν το νῶρ ς σου

NET Numbers 5:20 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 had sexual relations with you...."

NLT Numbers 5:20 But if you have gone astray by being unfaithful to your husband, and have defiled yourself by having sex with another man -- '

ESV Numbers 5:20 But if you have gone astray, though you are under your husband's authority, and if you have defiled yourself, and some man other than your husband has lain with you,

NIV Numbers 5:20 But if you have gone astray while married to your husband and you have defiled yourself by sleeping with a man other than your husband"--

KJV Numbers 5:20 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:

YLT Numbers 5:20 and thou, if thou hast turned aside under thy husband, and if thou hast been defiled, and any man doth give his copulation to thee besides thy husband --

LXE Numbers 5:20 But if being a married woman thou hast transgressed, or been polluted, and any one has lain with thee, beside thy husband:

- [Numbers 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

IF SHE IS GUILTY...

if you, however have gone astray - The **YOU** is emphatic.

Being under the authority of your husband, and if you have defiled yourself and a man other than your husband has had intercourse with you

NET Note - This is an example of the rhetorical device known as aposiopesis, or "sudden silence." The sentence is broken off due to the intensity or emphasis of the moment. The reader is left to conclude what the sentence would have said.

Defile (make unclean) ([02930](#)) see note on [tame](#)

Numbers 5:21 (then the priest shall have the woman swear with the oath of the curse, and the priest shall say to the woman), "the LORD make you a curse and an oath among your people by the LORD'S making your thigh waste away and your abdomen swell;

BGT Numbers 5:21 κα ρκιε ερε ς τ ν γυνα κα ν το ς ρκοις τ ς ρ ς τα της κα ρε ερε ς τ γυναικ ὃ η κ ρι ς σε ν ρ κα ν ρκιον ν μ σ το λαο σου ν τ ὁο ναι κ ριον τ ν μηρ ν σου διαπεπτωκ τα κα τ ν κοιλ αν σου πεπρησμ νην

NET Numbers 5:21 Then the priest will put the woman under the oath of the curse and will say to the her, "The LORD make you an attested curse among your people, if the LORD makes your thigh fall away and your abdomen swell;

NLT Numbers 5:21 "At this point the priest must put the woman under oath by saying, 'May the people know that the LORD's curse is upon you when he makes you infertile, causing your womb to shrivel and your abdomen to swell.

ESV Numbers 5:21 then' (let the priest make the woman take the oath of the curse, and say to the woman)

a'the LORD make you a curse and an oath among your people, when the LORD makes your thigh fall away and your body swell.

NIV Numbers 5:21 here the priest is to put the woman under this curse of the oath-"may the LORD cause your people to curse and denounce you when he causes your thigh to waste away and your abdomen to swell.

KJV Numbers 5:21 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; {rot: Heb. fall}

YLT Numbers 5:21 (then the priest hath caused the woman to swear with an oath of execration, and the priest hath said to the woman) -- Jehovah doth give thee for an execration, and for a curse, in the midst of thy people, in Jehovah's giving thy thigh to fall, and thy belly to swell,

LXE Numbers 5:21 then the priest shall adjure the woman by the oaths of this curse, and the priest shall say to the woman, The Lord bring thee into a curse and under an oath in the midst of thy people, in that the Lord should cause thy thigh to rot and thy belly to swell;

- an oath: Jos 6:26 1Sa 14:24 Ne 10:29 Mt 26:74
- The Lord make: Isa 65:15 Jer 29:22
- rot: Heb. fall, 2Ch 21:15 Pr 10:7
- [Numbers 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE LORD'S CURSE ON HER IF SHE IS GUILTY

(then the priest shall have the woman swear with the oath of the curse, and the priest shall say to the woman), "the LORD make you a curse and an oath among your people by the LORD'S making your thigh waste away and your abdomen swell - NIV = "may the LORD cause your people to curse and denounce you." "The first part of the imprecation is a call for Yahweh to make the adulteress a byword and a lesson for the people of Israel. What the woman has done and her punishment will be proclaimed in the streets of Israel! " (Currid)

Bush - The Lord make thee a curse and an oath. The context here contains a species or formula of adjuration which the priest administered to the accused party. It was equivalent to saying, "The Lord make thee such an object of cursing, that men may make thee a model of imprecation, saying, if I swear falsely, let God punish me, as he did such a woman."

NET Note - The outcome of this would be that she would be quoted by people in such forms of expression as an oath or a curse (see Jer 29:22).

NET Note on under the oath of the curse - This interpretation takes the two nouns as a hendiadys. The literal wording is "the LORD make you a curse and an oath among the people." In what sense would she be an **oath**? The point of the whole passage is that the priest is making her take an oath to see if she has been sinful and will be cursed.

Currid interprets it this way - The term for **curse** here is used of an imprecation that is added on to an **oath**. Thus, the woman is calling down punishment on herself if she is indeed guilty of the crime.

BSB - The terms used to describe the malady befalling the guilty woman (vv. 22, 27) are probably figurative, referring to barrenness, or miscarriage if she was pregnant at the time. This is indicated by the opposite result if she was innocent (v. 28; cf. Deut. 24:1, note).

Bush on your thigh waste away and your abdomen swell - The "rotting" of the thigh is in the Hebrew the "falling" of the thigh, and if we understand "thigh" in the euphemistic sense in which it is used Gen. 46:26, "the souls which came out of Jacob's thigh," we may infer that prolapsus uteri, or falling of the womb, was the real effect implied in the language of this clause and ovarian dropsy signified by the other.

Numbers 5:22 and this water that brings a curse shall go into your stomach, and make your abdomen swell and your thigh waste away." And the woman shall say, "Amen. Amen."

BGT Numbers 5:22 κα ε σελε σεται τ δωρ τ πικαταρ μενον το το ε ς τ ν κοιλ αν σου πρ σαι γαστ ρα κα διαπεσε ν μηρ ν σου κα ρε γυν γ νοιτο γ νοιτο

NET Numbers 5:22 and this water that causes the curse will go⁴⁷ into your stomach, and make your abdomen swell and your thigh rot."⁴⁸ Then the woman must say, "Amen, amen."

NLT Numbers 5:22 Now may this water that brings the curse enter your body and cause your abdomen to swell and your womb to shrivel.¹ ' And the woman will be required to say, 'Yes, let it be so.'

ESV Numbers 5:22 May this water that brings the curse apass into your bowels and make your womb swell and your thigh fall away.' And the woman shall say, b'Amen, Amen.'

NIV Numbers 5:22 May this water that brings a curse enter your body so that your abdomen swells and your thigh wastes away." 'Then the woman is to say, "Amen. So be it."

KJV Numbers 5:22 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.

YLT Numbers 5:22 and these waters which cause the curse have gone into thy bowels, to cause the belly to swell, and the thigh to fall; and the woman hath said, Amen, Amen.

LXE Numbers 5:22 and this water bringing the curse shall enter into thy womb to cause thy belly to swell, and thy thigh to rot. And the woman shall say, So be it, So be it.

- go into: Nu 5:27 Ps 109:18 Pr 1:31 Eze 3:3
- the woman: De 27:15-26 Job 31:21,22,39,40 Ps 7:4,5
- Amen: Ps 41:13 72:19 89:52 Joh 3:3,11 5:24,25 6:53
- [Numbers 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

and this water that brings a curse shall go into your stomach, and make your abdomen swell and your thigh waste away

- As medical doctor and a pathology who has seen many stomachs, while some have tried to explain this naturally, it seems clearly to be supernatural. Yes it had "natural" manifestations, but the Source of the curse was God the Just and Righteous Judge. Nu 5:21 emphasizes that it was "by the LORD'S making" that her "thigh waste away and (her) abdomen swell."

Constable - the punishment fell on the organs that had been the instruments of the woman's sin."The thigh is often used as a euphemism for the sexual organs."

And the woman shall say, "Amen. Amen - Gr. γενοιτο, γενοιτο so be it, so be it. This represents the woman's acceptance of the oath without any reservations. (cf Deut. 27:26; Neh. 5:13) "The response is probably doubled to express her full consent and concurrence with the import of the malediction." (Bush)

Bush adds an interesting comment - It is difficult to conceive how a woman could respond Amen in such circumstances, if she were really guilty, unless she had become so hardened in sin as to be utterly reckless what she uttered. But if she confessed that she had been defiled, or, which was equivalent, if she declined drinking, then, according to the Hebrew tradition, she was permanently separated from her husband, but without dowry.

Numbers 5:23 'The priest shall then write these curses on a scroll, and he shall wash them off into the water of bitterness.

BGT Numbers 5:23 κα γρ ψει ερε ς τ ς ρ ς τατας ε ς βιβλ ον κα ξαλε ψει ε ς τ δωρ το λεγμο το πικαταρωμ νου

NET Numbers 5:23 ""Then the priest will write these curses on a scroll and then scrape them off into the bitter water.

NLT Numbers 5:23 And the priest will write these curses on a piece of leather and wash them off into the bitter water.

ESV Numbers 5:23 "Then the priest shall write these curses in a book and wash them off into the water of bitterness.

NIV Numbers 5:23 " 'The priest is to write these curses on a scroll and then wash them off into the bitter water.

KJV Numbers 5:23 And the priest shall write these curses in a book, and he shall blot them out with the bitter water:

YLT Numbers 5:23 'And the priest hath written these execrations in a book, and hath blotted them out with the bitter waters,

- write these: Ex 17:14 De 31:19 2Ch 34:24 Job 31:35 Jer 51:60-64 1Co 16:21,22 Rev 20:12
- blot: Ps 51:1,9 Isa 43:25 44:22 Ac 3:19
- [Numbers 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

CURSES WASHED INTO WATER OF BITTERNESS

The priest shall then write these curses on a scroll, and he shall wash them off into the water of bitterness- The water of bitterness was likely literally "bitter" and would produce "bitterness" or punishment if the woman were guilty. The Septuagint has "water of reproof (reproach, rebuke)." LXE translates it "water of conviction." The **water** was bitter tasting and brought a "bitter" curse.

NET Note - The words written on the scroll were written with a combination of ingredients mixed into an ink. The idea is probably that they would have been washed or flaked off into the water, so that she drank the words of the curse—it became a part of her being.

Bitterness (04751)([mar](#)) is an adjective most often used figuratively to express the emotional response to a destructive, heart-crushing situation. It is used in a literal sense - bitter grape clusters (Dt. 32:32); bitter water (Ex 15:23); food in general (Pr 27:7) Uses in Numbers - Num. 5:18; Num. 5:19; Num. 5:23; Num. 5:24; Num. 5:27

Numbers 5:24 'Then he shall make the woman drink the water of bitterness that brings a curse, so that the water which brings a curse will go into her and cause bitterness.

BGT Numbers 5:24 κα ποτιε τ ν γυναικα τ δωρ το λεγμο το πικαταρωμ νου κα ε σελε σεται ε ς α τ ν τ δωρ τ πικαταρ μενον το λεγμο

NET Numbers 5:24 He will make the woman drink the bitter water that brings a curse, and the water that brings a curse will enter her to produce bitterness.

NLT Numbers 5:24 He will make the woman drink the bitter water that brings on the curse. When the water enters her body, it will cause bitter suffering if she is guilty.

ESV Numbers 5:24 And he shall make the woman drink the water of bitterness that brings the curse, and the water that brings the curse shall enter into her and cause bitter pain.

NIV Numbers 5:24 He shall have the woman drink the bitter water that brings a curse, and this water will enter her and cause bitter suffering.

KJV Numbers 5:24 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.

YLT Numbers 5:24 and hath caused the woman to drink the bitter waters which cause the curse, and the waters which cause the curse have entered into her for bitter things.

LXE Numbers 5:24 And he shall cause the woman to drink the water of the conviction that brings the curse; and the water of the conviction that brings the curse shall enter into her.

- Zec 5:3,4 Mal 3:5
- [Numbers 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Then he shall make the woman drink the water of bitterness that brings a curse- She would in consequence drink the very words of the execration.

So that the water which brings a curse will go into her and cause bitterness

NET Note - The water was "bitter" in view of the consequences it held for her if she was proven to be guilty. The bitter water, if it convicted her, would pronounce a curse on her.

Numbers 5:25 'The priest shall take the grain offering of jealousy from the woman's hand, and he shall wave the grain offering before the LORD and bring it to the altar;

BGT Numbers 5:25 κα λ μψεται ερε ς κ χειρ ς τ ς γυναικ ς τ ν θυσ αν τ ς ζηλοτυπ ας κα πιθ σει τ ν θυσ αν ναντι κυρ ου κα προσο σει α τ ν πρ ς τ θυσιαστ ριον

NET Numbers 5:25 The priest will take the grain offering of suspicion from the woman's hand, wave the grain offering before the LORD, and bring it to the altar.

NLT Numbers 5:25 "The priest will take the jealousy offering from the woman's hand, lift it up before the LORD, and carry it to the altar.

ESV Numbers 5:25 And the priest shall take the grain offering of jealousy out of the woman's hand and shall wave the grain offering before the LORD and bring it to the altar.

NIV Numbers 5:25 The priest is to take from her hands the grain offering for jealousy, wave it before the LORD and bring it to the altar.

KJV Numbers 5:25 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:

YLT Numbers 5:25 'And the priest hath taken out of the hand of the woman the present of jealousy, and hath waved the present before Jehovah, and hath brought it near unto the altar;

LXE Numbers 5:25 And the priest shall take from the hand of the woman the sacrifice of jealousy, and shall present the sacrifice before the Lord, and shall bring it to the altar.

- priest: Nu 5:15,18
- wave: Ex 29:24 Lev 8:27
- [Numbers 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

The priest shall take the grain offering of jealousy from the woman's hand, and he shall wave the grain offering before the LORD and bring it to the altar - "Shall move it to and fro in token of presentation or dedication to the Lord." (Bush)

Jealousy (07068)([qin'ah](#)) means ardor, zeal, jealousy.(from colour produced in face by deep emotion); ardour of jealousy of husband Proverbs 6:34; Proverbs 27:4; The picture is that of intense fervor, passion, and emotion. Key word in Numbers 5 - Num. 5:14; Num. 5:15; Num. 5:18; Num. 5:25; Num. 5:29; Num. 5:30; Num. 25:11;

Numbers 5:26 and the priest shall take a handful of the grain offering as its memorial offering and offer it up in smoke on the altar, and afterward he shall make the woman drink the water.

BGT Numbers 5:26 κα δρ ξεται ερε ς π τ ς θυσ ας τ μνημ συνον α τ ς κα νο σει α τ π τ θυσιαστ ριον κα μετ τα τα ποτιε τ ν γυνα κα τ δωρ

NET Numbers 5:26 Then the priest will take a handful of the grain offering as its memorial portion, burn it on the altar, and afterward make the woman drink the water.

NLT Numbers 5:26 He will take a handful of the flour as a token portion and burn it on the altar, and he will require the woman to drink the water.

ESV Numbers 5:26 And the priest shall take a handful of the grain offering, as its memorial portion, and burn it on the altar, and afterward shall make the woman drink the water.

NIV Numbers 5:26 The priest is then to take a handful of the grain offering as a memorial offering and burn it on the altar; after that, he is to have the woman drink the water.

KJV Numbers 5:26 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.

YLT Numbers 5:26 and the priest hath taken a handful of the present, its memorial, and hath made perfume on the altar, and afterwards doth cause the woman to drink the water:

LXE Numbers 5:26 And the priest shall take a handful of the sacrifice as a memorial of it, and shall offer it up upon the altar; and afterwards he shall cause the woman to drink the water.

- Lev 2:2,9 5:12 6:15
- [Numbers 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

and the priest shall take a handful of the grain offering as its memorial offering and offer it up in smoke on the altar, and afterward he shall make the woman drink the water - Bush - "This handful was to be the memorial immediately after spoken of. See Note, Lev. 2:2, where the nature of the "memorial" is explained. The portion of the offering that remained after the memorial-handful was taken out was eaten by the priest, unless the husband was a priest, when it was scattered among the ashes. This offering, in the midst of the transaction, was a solemn acknowledgment that the whole affair was to be conducted under the Lord's auspices, and that he was appealed to as a God "from whom no secret is hid."

Numbers 5:27 'When he has made her drink the water, then it shall come about, if she has defiled herself and has been unfaithful to her husband, that the water which brings a curse will go into her and cause bitterness, and her abdomen will swell and her thigh will waste away, and the woman will become a curse among her people.'

BGT Numbers 5:27 κα σται ν μεμιαμνη κα λθ λθ τν νδρα ατς κα εσελεσεται ες ατν τ δωρ το λεγμο τ πικαταρμενον κα πρησθσεται τν κοιλ αν κα διαπεσεται μηρς ατς κα σται γυν ες ρν ντ λα ατς

NET Numbers 5:27 When he has made her drink the water, then, if she has defiled herself and behaved unfaithfully toward her husband, the water that brings a curse will enter her to produce bitterness – her abdomen will swell, her thigh will fall away, and the woman will become a curse among her people.

NLT Numbers 5:27 If she has defiled herself by being unfaithful to her husband, the water that brings on the curse will cause bitter suffering. Her abdomen will swell and her womb will shrink,¹ and her name will become a curse among her people.

ESV Numbers 5:27 And when he has made her drink the water, then, if she has defiled herself and has broken faith with her husband, the water that brings the curse shall enter into her and cause bitter pain, and her womb shall swell, and her thigh shall fall away, and the woman shall become a curse among her people.

NIV Numbers 5:27 If she has defiled herself and been unfaithful to her husband, then when she is made to drink the water that brings a curse, it will go into her and cause bitter suffering; her abdomen will swell and her thigh waste away,¹ and she will become accursed among her people.

KJV Numbers 5:27 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.

YLT Numbers 5:27 yea, he hath caused her to drink the water, and it hath come to pass, if she hath been defiled, and doth commit a trespass against her husband, that the waters which cause the curse have gone into her for bitter things, and her belly hath swelled, and her thigh hath fallen, and the woman hath become an execration in the midst of her people.

LXE Numbers 5:27 And it shall come to pass, if she be defiled, and have altogether escaped the notice of her husband, then the water of the conviction that brings the curse shall enter into her; and she shall swell in her belly, and her thigh shall rot, and the woman shall be for a curse in the midst of her people.

- if she be defiled: Nu 5:20 Pr 5:4-11 Ec 7:26 Ro 6:21 2Co 2:16 Heb 10:26-30 2Pe 2:10
- the woman: De 28:37 Ps 83:9-11 Isa 65:15 Jer 24:9 29:18,22 42:18 Zec 8:13
- [Numbers 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE PUDDING!

If she were guilty it would soon be obvious and the same if she were not guilty.

'When he has made her drink the water, then it shall come about, if she has defiled herself and has been unfaithful to her husband, that the water which brings a curse will go into her and cause bitterness, and her abdomen will swell and her thigh will waste away, and the woman will become a curse among her people.'

Defile (make unclean) ([02930](#)) see note on [tame](#)

Numbers 5:28 'But if the woman has not defiled herself and is clean, she will then be free and conceive children.'

BGT Numbers 5:28 ν δ μ μιανθ γυν κα καθαρ κα θα σται κα κσπερματιε σπ ρμα

NET Numbers 5:28 But if the woman has not defiled herself, and is clean, then she will be free of ill effects and will be able to bear children.

NLT Numbers 5:28 But if she has not defiled herself and is pure, then she will be unharmed and will still be able to have children.

ESV Numbers 5:28 But if the woman has not defiled herself and is clean, then she shall be free and shall conceive children.

NIV Numbers 5:28 If, however, the woman has not defiled herself and is free from impurity, she will be cleared of guilt and will be able to have children.

KJV Numbers 5:28 And if the woman be not defiled, but be clean; then she shall be free, and shall conceive seed.

YLT Numbers 5:28 'And if the woman hath not been defiled, and is clean, then she hath been acquitted, and hath been sown with seed.

- And if: Nu 5:19 Mic 7:7-10 2Co 4:17 1Pe 1:7
- and shall: Ps 113:9
- [Numbers 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

But if the woman has not defiled herself and is clean, she will then be free and conceive children- The fact that she was now free to conceive children implies that the **curse** would bring barrenness on the guilty woman.

NIVSB - For a woman in the ancient Near East to be denied the ability to bear children was a personal loss of inestimable proportions. Since it was in the bearing of children that a woman's worth was realized in the ancient world, this was a grievous punishment.

Defile (make unclean) ([02930](#)) see note on [tame](#)

Numbers 5:29 'This is the law of jealousy: when a wife, being under the authority of her husband, goes astray and defiles herself,

BGT Numbers 5:29 ο τος ν μοσ τ ς ζηλοτυπας ν παραβ γυν π νδρ ς ο σα κα μιανθ

NET Numbers 5:29 "This is the law for cases of jealousy, when a wife, while under her husband's authority, goes astray and defiles herself,

NLT Numbers 5:29 "This is the ritual law for dealing with suspicion. If a woman goes astray and defiles herself while under her husband's authority,

ESV Numbers 5:29 "This is the law in cases of jealousy, when a wife, although under her husband's authority, goes astray and defiles herself,

NIV Numbers 5:29 " 'This, then, is the law of jealousy when a woman goes astray and defiles herself while married to her husband,

KJV Numbers 5:29 This is the law of jealousies, when a wife goeth aside to another instead of her husband, and is defiled;

YLT Numbers 5:29 'This is the law of jealousies, when a wife turneth aside under her husband, and hath been defiled,

LXE Numbers 5:29 This is the law of jealousy, wherein a married woman should happen to transgress, and be defiled;

- the law: Lev 7:11 11:46 13:59 14:54-57 15:32,33
- when a wife goeth: Nu 5:12,15,19 Isa 5:7,8
- [Numbers 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

This is the law of jealousy: when a wife, being under the authority of her husband, goes astray and defiles herself,

Jealousy (07068)([qin'ah](#) means ardor, zeal, jealousy.(from colour produced in face by deep emotion); ardour of jealousy of husband Proverbs 6:34; Proverbs 27:4; The picture is that of intense fervor, passion, and emotion. Key word in Numbers 5 - Num. 5:14; Num. 5:15; Num. 5:18; Num. 5:25; Num. 5:29; Num. 5:30; Num. 25:11;

Defiles (make unclean) (02930) see note on [tame](#)

Numbers 5:30 or when a spirit of jealousy comes over a man and he is jealous of his wife, he shall then make the woman stand before the LORD, and the priest shall apply all this law to her.

BGT Numbers 5:30 νθρωπος ν π λθ π α τ ν πνε μα ζηλ σεως κα ζηλ σ τ ν γυνα κα α το κα στ σει τ ν γυνα κα α το ναντι κυρ ου κα ποι σει α τ ερε ς π ντα τ ν ν μον το τον

NET Numbers 5:30 or when jealous feelings come over a man and he becomes suspicious of his wife; then he must have the woman stand before the LORD, and the priest will carry out all this law upon her.

NLT Numbers 5:30 or if a man becomes jealous and is suspicious that his wife has been unfaithful, the husband must present his wife before the LORD, and the priest will apply this entire ritual law to her.

ESV Numbers 5:30 or when the spirit of jealousy comes over a man and he is jealous of his wife. Then he shall set the woman before the LORD, and the priest shall carry out for her all this law.

NIV Numbers 5:30 or when feelings of jealousy come over a man because he suspects his wife. The priest is to have her stand before the LORD and is to apply this entire law to her.

KJV Numbers 5:30 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.

YLT Numbers 5:30 or when a spirit of jealousy passeth over a man, and he hath been jealous of his wife, then he hath caused the woman to stand before Jehovah, and the priest hath done to her all this law,

LXE Numbers 5:30 or in the case of a man on whomsoever the spirit of jealousy should come, and he should be jealous of his wife, and he should place his wife before the Lord, and the priest shall execute towards her all this law.

- [Numbers 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

or when a spirit of jealousy comes over a man and he is jealous of his wife, he shall then make the woman stand before the LORD, and the priest shall apply all this law to her

Jealous (zealous)(07065)([qanah](#) from [qin'ah](#) = zeal, ardor - from color produced in face by deep emotion) means to be jealous, to be envious, to be zealous. The picture is that of intense fervor, passion, and emotion. Zeal is an eagerness and ardent interest in pursuit of something and implies energetic and unflagging pursuit of an aim or devotion to a cause. Jealousy can be righteous or unrighteous - e.g., Genesis 37:11 records that Joseph's "brothers were jealous of him" and here we see the mindset and emotion of their fleshly jealousy led to unrighteous deeds! Contrast Phinehas godly jealousy that motivated righteous deeds!

Brian Bell - Put your spouse before the Lord - What do you do if you have suspicions your spouse has been unfaithful these days? 1st step is to look in their eyes & ask/confront them. 2nd step set/bring them before the Lord (16,30) - i.e. pray "God, please expose them!" We may not have this law today, but we have an all-seeing God to whom we will answer one day! Remember even hidden unfaithfulness can create a spirit of jealousy/doubt. Even when infidelity isn't discovered, it changes who you are. A person goes from being a candid, open human being to a secretive, hidden one. Marriages can and do survive affairs, and many become stronger having weathered the crisis but not without pain and a genuine desire to recommit. - 4 P's for Prevention: Be protective of your marriage. Avoid risky situations(alone w/opposite sex). Most people do not plan to be unfaithful! Be positive. Look for what is right in your spouse and tell him or her daily. People who commit adultery are often looking for appreciation & affirmation. Be polite. Always talk to your spouse with respect. Be careful what you say to each other and how you say it. Show courtesy and caring in the way you treat one another. Be playful, and make fun, sex, and humor a mainstay in your marriage. Schedule time to play with one another, and have a date nights.

Numbers 5:31 'Moreover, the man will be free from guilt, but that woman shall bear her guilt.'"

BGT Numbers 5:31 καὶ ὁ ἄνθρωπος πᾶρσις καὶ ἡ γυναῖκίς ληψεται τὴν μαρτυρίαν αὐτῆς

NET Numbers 5:31 Then the man will be free from iniquity, but that woman will bear the consequences³ of her iniquity."⁴

NLT Numbers 5:31 The husband will be innocent of any guilt in this matter, but his wife will be held accountable for her sin."

ESV Numbers 5:31 The man shall be free from iniquity, but the woman shall bear her iniquity."

NIV Numbers 5:31 The husband will be innocent of any wrongdoing, but the woman will bear the consequences^a of her sin.' "

KJV Numbers 5:31 Then shall the man be guiltless from iniquity, and this woman shall bear her iniquity.

YLT Numbers 5:31 and the man hath been acquitted from iniquity, and that woman doth bear her iniquity.'

LXE Numbers 5:31 Then the man shall be clear from sin, and that woman shall bear her sin.

- be guiltless: Ps 37:6
- bear: Nu 9:13 Lev 20:10,17-20 Eze 18:4 Ro 2:8,9
- [Numbers 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Moreover, the man will be free from guilt - The man refers to her husband.

but that woman shall bear her guilt The word for guilt is '[avon](#)' which is iniquity or guilt tantamount to a twisting of God's standard or deviation from it.

Currid applies this section - The sanctity of the marriage covenant in ancient Israel is underscored by this law. Adultery is a serious offence against God's gift and expectation for marriage. The bond of marriage must be protected; fidelity and virtue in marriage are required and nonnegotiable. In our own day and age we look at these laws of Numbers 5 and we see them as barbaric, outdated and unnecessary. And, indeed, these laws are no longer binding on the people of God. Yet let us not throw the baby out with the bathwater! We live in a day in which marriage itself is shunned and seen as being out of date. Adultery is apparently very common in this day and age; there seem to be no holds barred. Nevertheless God's expectations have not changed.